truth and nonviolence

truth

REPORT OF THE UNESCO SYMPOSIUM ON
TRUTH AND NONVIOLENCE IN GANDHI'S HUMANISM
PARIS 14-17 OCTOBER 1969

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and nonviolence

GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION NEW DELHI
ON BEHALF OF
INDIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR COOPERATION WITH UNESCO

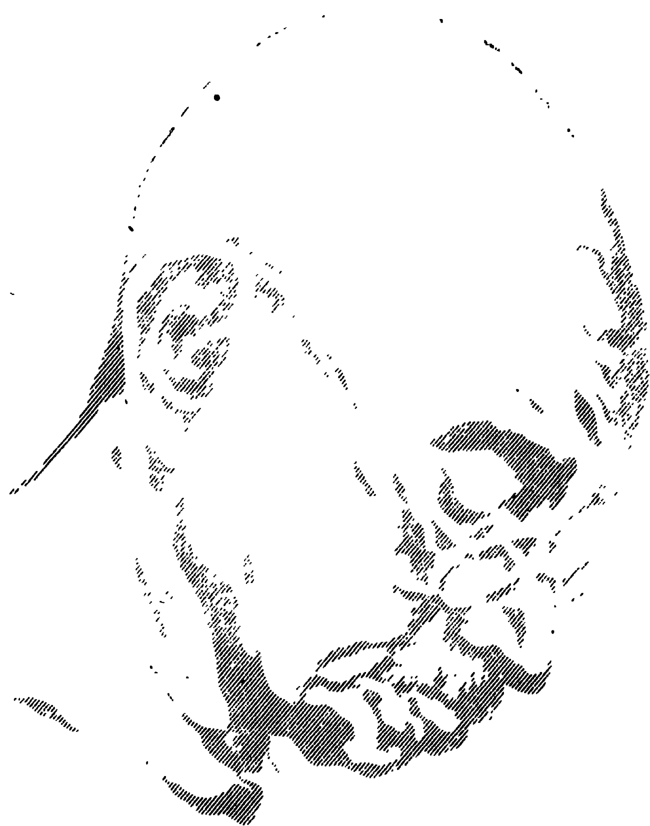
This volume gives the discussions at the international symposium on 'Truth and Nonviolence in Gandhi's Humanism' organized by Unesco in consultation with the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with Unesco, on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's Centennial Celebration in Paris, 14-17 October 1969.

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They say
they do not understand
my language,
that they speak
a language foreign to me.
But I know this,
that when I am gone
they will speak my language.

Adapted from
Gandhi's reflections on Nehru



Contents

Introduction

Almost a quarter of a century separates us from Gandhi. During these critical years, and in particular during the decade of the sixties which ended with the Gandhi centenary, there has come into existence a considerable body of literature on Gandhi—among them several biographical studies, numerous anthologies, a number of critical and interpretative essays on the salient features of his teaching and the first forty volumes of his *Collected Works*. The output of magazine articles on Gandhi during this period has, of course, been phenomenal, no doubt because of the interest aroused in him by the widespread use of nonviolent direct action for peace and justice throughout the world. In a word, in one way or another Gandhi has figured as a constant irritant in our processes of political thinking, teasing us into unconventional modes of behaviour and the striking of bizarre political attitudes. And yet, despite all this, we can hardly claim to have attained anything like a conclusive understanding of Gandhi's central teaching of truth and nonviolence.

The reasons for our still somewhat fragmentary understanding of Gandhi are several. There is, to begin with, our psychological inability to keep pace with a man who thought miles ahead of us. We try to measure up to him with our own heavy-footed stride, and when we fail to overtake him, seldom do

we realize that it is our pace that may need quickening. Instead we give up the chase and go back to our well-trodden ways.

There is also the pull of what one may call 'the myth of the complex'—an ingrained tendency of the human mind to look for complex answers to simple problems. Despite endless protestations from him, we are still unwilling to take Gandhi at his word and to accustom ourselves to the utter simplicity of his teaching. Using every sophisticated modern tool that we can lay hands on, we complicate his simple ideas beyond recognition and, having done so, relegate them to the limbo of the absurd.

In the main, however, our misperception of the gandhian teaching arises from one single connected factor—the diffuse character of Gandhi's writings and their relative inaccessibility. For an inveterate activist, Gandhi's literary output is breathtaking. On a rough count, during the fifty years of his public life, he ground out some ten million words, now being patiently put together in his *Collected Works*. These consist chiefly of his profuse journalistic writings, reports of his speeches and conversations, letters and memoranda, and other fragments, besides of course the few, very few books that he wrote. Indeed, these 'books' themselves, except for that early and exotic pamphlet, *Hind Swaraj*, were written as serials; so that what we have before us as the gandhian corpus is a vast scatter of outwardly ephemeral writings, none of them longer than an

average piece of journalism, and spanning fifty years (in fact, the full first half of our present traumatic century) of a life of intense public activity.

In the nature of things, only a fraction of this enormous material has hitherto been within reach of the student. The first volume of the *Collected Works* appeared ten years after Gandhi's death and it will be at least another ten years (taking us into the unpredictable eighties) before the last of the projected eighty volumes is out. And yet, as we have noted earlier, the production of 'scholarly' works on Gandhi has been going on unabated over a period of thirty years, roughly from 1939 to the year of the centenary, 1969. This has been a period of what I would call 'relative undocumentation', seeing that even the most diligent scholar was basing his conclusions on partial evidence. As for the less painstaking 'scholars' who have turned out books on Gandhi and who vastly outnumber the former, their staple has been the many capsule anthologies that had usurped the gandhian literary scene during these critical years. Intended no doubt for popular consumption and containing an unhistorical scramble of short—often epigrammatic and memorable—passages from Gandhi's writings, torn from their context, these anthologies none the less proved a blessing, though a questionable one, to the harassed author wishing to write a book on Gandhi. The distortion of the gandhian teaching that has resulted from this chaotic situation is there for all to see and

it will be many years before the fissures are healed.

It may be wondered if I am not exaggerating the need for exhaustive documentation in the case of Gandhi and turning it into a fetish. Does one have to wait for all the volumes of the *Collected Works* to be published before sitting down to write one's long-cherished book on Gandhi? Are not the main features of his teaching sufficiently well known already? Would not the bulk of his writings in later years represent no more than variations on the themes that he had spelt out with such clarity in, for example, *Hind Swaraj* and his autobiography?

To answer these questions, one must look at the nature of the gandhian corpus. Had Gandhi left behind him, as other thinkers of his eminence have done—and let us not be deceived into accepting the popular heresy that Gandhi was an activist and no thinker—some clearly defined body of primary writing, containing a conclusive exposition of his ideas, we may well have ignored his scattered 'secondary' writings or used them merely as footnotes. But he did nothing of the kind. He wrote 'as the spirit moved him at the time of writing'. He grew 'from truth to truth'. Till the very end of his days he asserted: 'Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly'.

Gandhi has explained his methods of thinking and writing sufficiently clearly for us to have any doubts about their nature. 'I must say what I feel and think at a given moment . . . without regard to what I may

have said before . . . ' 'At the time of writing, I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements . . . but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment . . .' 'People say . . . that I say today something different from what I said years ago. The fact of the matter is that conditions have changed. I am the same. . .There has been a gradual evolution in my environment and I react to it as a satyagrahi.' 'Whenever I have been obliged to compare my writing even of fifty years ago with the latest, I have discovered no inconsistency between the two.' 'Friends who observe inconsistency . . . should try to see if there is not an underlying and abiding consistency between the two seeming inconsistencies.'

In other words, as he hinted in his autobiography, the very act of thinking and writing, from day to day, was for him 'an experiment with truth'. This seeming fickleness was, in Gandhi, the expression of an extraordinary fecundity. To wait upon truth rather than that truth should wait upon him, to keep himself open to the winds of change, to be undogmatic—this was the essence of his satyagraha, the upholding of the primacy of truth.

Just as Gandhi grew outwardly, within a space of twenty-five years, from being a 'recruiting sergeant' (during world war I) to being a doughty opponent of war (during world war II)—to give but one example of his openness to change—so the inward

evolution of his ideas was a continuous process spanning the entire gamut of his public life. His quest for truth knew no respite. It was for him an endless voyage of discovery on an uncharted sea. The ship may dock in temporarily at ports of call, but there would be no destination—for Gandhi's truth knows no tarrying. Such being the case, the systematic study of Gandhi can hardly yet be said to have begun, for the full range of his thinking is only now becoming apparent to us. Nevertheless, during the two critical decades of the fifties and sixties, our comprehension of the gandhian teaching has moved across the entire spectrum—from unquestioning faith to a state of cautious agnosticism.

In relation to the present situation, it is possible to mark out at least four clear stages through which we have passed in our twenty-year search for Gandhi. Symbolic of the earliest stage was the Unesco seminar which was held in New Delhi in the winter of 1952-53, exactly five years after Gandhi's death. This was a gruelling affair, spread over nearly two weeks, with some half-a-dozen 'secret sessions' thrown in. An examination of the issues that were debated at the seminar strikes one with speechless wonder, although with the hindsight of history, we may now be willing to concede that, of course, they merely reflected the charming naivete of those years. It was natural at that time for hard-headed politicians and administrators, no less than for

romantic idealists, to work on the assumption that through the agency of international organizations a new and better world could be reassembled from the ruins of the old. And where would you find a more exhaustive blueprint for that new world than in the writings of Gandhi?

The second stage was a period of revolutionary euphoria. Its outstanding symbols were Vinoba Bhave and Martin Luther King, whose spectacular successes in the related areas of economic and social justice revived our wilting faith in the gandhian teaching and brought us visions of a new era. If a new world were not yet within our reach, we could at least attack and undermine the regressive resources of the old in selected pockets. Just as the first stage was marked by an over-emphasis on the global applicability of the gandhian teaching, here one encountered a similar over-emphasis on its selective technical efficacy. From being a blueprint for a new world, the gandhian teaching became in our hands a technique for social change.

The transition to the third stage followed naturally from the manner in which we had substituted the technique for the blueprint. Quick to grasp the contrast between the relative unserviceability of the gandhian teaching in the creation of a new world and its relative efficacy in the battering down of entrenched areas of power, we began to develop the heresy of the two Gandhis—the essential and the marginal. This was a stage which was marked by an

endless process of argumentation, seeking to establish Gandhi's relevance to our time—in plain words, the irrelevance of the marginal Gandhi and the relevance of his essential teaching.

The fourth stage of our comprehension of Gandhi was reached when it began to dawn upon us that no coherent body of thought could be both relevant and irrelevant at the same time, or partly true and partly false. Symbolic of this stage, I like to think, is the Unesco symposium on Gandhi reported in these pages.

What is the overriding impression one gets from the nearly twenty hours of discussion and argument that took place at the symposium? I think it is of the mood of realism, humility and courage—qualities which were inconspicuous in the earlier stages of our confrontation with Gandhi—in which the participants essayed some of the sensitive areas of Gandhi study. I shall touch upon one example and leave the rest to be savoured individually by the reader.

'Did Gandhi fail—or rather, was Gandhi a failure?' I can hardly imagine circumstances in the past in which a question of this kind would have been asked and answered with the dispassion that the symposium brought to bear on it. It was, characteristically, an Indian who first raised it. 'I believe Gandhi was no romantic', said Mr Romesh Thapar. 'He was a skilled and astute political leader. He advanced a thesis of revolt

which captured the age-old dream of the Indian mind. But he died convinced that he had failed, and failed utterly, because the very weapon that he had forged for the unity of India had failed to preserve that unity.'

Mr Rene Maheu took up the question and examined it with great perspicacity. 'Is it true', he asked, 'that all great men died with the feeling that they had failed? Is not failure, in fact, a kind of hallmark of the authenticity of greatness? Is there any great man who, having undertaken a very great task, has died satisfied that he has fulfilled it?'

Having thus invested the question with a wider dimension, Mr Maheu went on to ask: 'What is implied when you say, twenty-five years after Gandhi's death, that he considered he had failed? Does it mean that you have to overhaul, to take another look at, the gandhian vision of India? Does it mean that you have to revise the methods and the tools? Or does it imply, on the contrary, that everything was true, that fundamentally the gandhian vision of India was true, that the methods were essentially right, and that you have merely to start all over again?'

This was a novel idea—not merely to carry on the work that Gandhi left unfinished, but to start all over again. Describing it as 'a perfectly legitimate thing in history', Mr Maheu said: 'There is no great challenge that you can meet at once, no game you can play through to the end the first time. You can

always start again. You are always justified in starting again—with other people and in other conditions. But then do we accept that the premises were right and must not be changed?'

Reflecting on a thesis put forward earlier by Dr M. Drobyshev—that 'Gandhi goes from the ethical to the economic; his economic theory is a reflection of his ethical outlook'—Mr Maheu argued: 'It is because he was proceeding from the ethical to the economic that nonviolence occupied such an essential place in Gandhi's economic-cum-social action.... But is that not one of the points from which the question of failure may well arise and assume a certain significance?... Can one envisage a process of development in which the direction is from the ethical to the economic?... If one continues to think that the moral-ethical problem is to be tackled from an ethical angle alone, how is it possible to proceed to development?'

Mr Maheu concluded his observations with a tour de force: 'If you reverse the terms and proceed from the economic to the ethical, where along this particular path do you meet nonviolence?'

Although it cannot be said that the symposium as a whole faced up to this question of Gandhi's 'failure', at least three other participants made significant contributions to the debate. Professor Jeanne Hersch said: 'Gandhi very seldom chose words which would mean that his thoughts embraced a totality. Thus when you say "entirely

failed", I am worried about the word "entirely". I am sure Gandhi would never accept the notion that he failed entirely.' 'What would "success" mean in Gandhi's estimation?' she asked. 'To succeed, he would have thought, would be to remove man from the human condition, give a final turn to history, destroy the movement between success and failure which is the hallmark of the human condition. In other words, there is a kind of failure in Gandhi, as in every great human undertaking, but to speak of a "total failure" has no gandhian meaning.'

'How do we understand failure?' asked Mr G. Ramachandran. 'Mr Maheu said that all great men fail. To that I would add the corollary, that no great man ever failed. You may lose a battle, but you do not lose the war. Gandhi occasionally lost a battle, as every general in history has lost a battle. Some battle is always lost, but the war is not lost. Gandhi's war is not lost and must not be allowed to be lost.'

'At all events', argued Professor Olivier Lacombe, 'whether there was a failure or not—and no doubt there was a partial failure—Gandhi did not die in despair. And that is what is important. He was not in despair himself. He did not give up his mission in despair.'

Explaining his point, in rather metaphysical terms, Professor Lacombe went on: 'Gandhi firmly believed that the satyagrahi never fails and is never vanquished: because if he succeeds in convincing his

adversary, he has won; and if he does not succeed and has to die, then again he has won, since thereby he has been able to be a witness to truth, which is the highest possible lot that can fall to anyone.'

Among the other themes that came up for discussion at the symposium, I would commend the following for the reader's especial attention.

TRUTH

To live and to be in truth means that our appearances and our actions should correspond to what we have within us (Lanza del Vasto). Truth is the very substance of morality (Eteki-Mboumoua). When we speak of truth in Gandhi, we should examine and follow Gandhi's own conduct and see how truthful he was in relation to the truths that he perpetuated (El-Khachab). The greatness of Gandhi is in part due to his ceaseless efforts to ascertain the facts of a situation before acting (Naess). Gandhi had a natural consciousness of what truth is and followed a path which was his humanism (Farhadi). Clarity requires that we keep track of each use of the term truth in Gandhi's writings (Naess). Gandhi based his nonviolence on the absolute, because truth for him was an absolute need or requirement (Hersch). Without the fusion of the inner and the outer, Gandhi did not see the power of collective action (Thapar). We can never speak of Gandhi without trying at least to be in the thought of Gandhi (Hersch).

NONVIOLENCE

Nonviolence is an insurance against the risk that you may injure or kill those who have right on their side (Naess). One should try and see how nonviolence can be both the supreme weapon in struggle and/or the supreme dignity (d'Ormesson). Nonviolence is not simply a recipe which will work at any cost, but a risk one runs with the hope of success (Habachi). In nonviolence there is the idea of a profound and deep agreement with everything that lives (Herzog). There is necessarily a dialogue in nonviolence, because through it you wish to convince the other party and to bring him to discover in you not his adversary but a man like him (Eteki-Mboumoua). Nonviolence is a mental withdrawal from the world and from history (Maheu). Gandhi has shown that nonviolence too is impossible without self-abnegation (Rahula). Gandhi's nonviolence was strong as steel, flexible but unbreakable (Ramachandran). Nonviolence gets its strength only through the deep independence or asceticism of the one who practises it (Hersch).

TRUTH AND NONVIOLENCE

For Gandhi, nonviolence and truth were one whole (Lacombe). In Gandhi's mind, truth incarnates as love, and love translates itself into action and incarnates as nonviolence (Ramachandran). We should try to understand the difference between

Gandhi's conception of truth as something concrete, unique and evident and his conception of nonviolence as something existential and human (Krasa). Gandhi placed so much importance on truth and nonviolence that they became, in his eyes, absolute essentials for humanity (Purachatra).

VIOLENCE AND NONVIOLENCE

There is in nonviolence an element of dialogue, of language; it is something which speaks, which says something to the other. Whereas violence does not speak, it says nothing to the other (Hersch). If Gandhi had not placed nonviolence above everything else, he would have been a violent fighter for justice (Lacombe). Nonviolence cannot be opposed to violence. It is opposed to non-commitment, to non-participation, in an active and *militant* manner, in social events (Karsz). For Gandhi, the very framework of history is one of nonviolence (del Campo). It is insane to ask a nation or group to answer an invasion with nonviolence if that nation or group does not have leaders who believe in nonviolence. There must be the cultivation of the basic attitude of nonviolence before the question becomes meaningful (Naess).

RELIGION

Gandhi's God was an immanent God (Ramachandran). In Gandhi, the general philosophy
 of Hinduism becomes an ethic of political action

(Thapar). Gandhi's approach to reality is religious rather than philosophical. He approached reality through nonviolence (Nara).

ETHICS AND ECONOMICS

Although Gandhi spoke of the transformation of society, his goal was to educate individual men in the spirit of nonviolence (Uvalic). In Gandhi's mind, there is no such thing as a divorce between economic and ethical development. Ethics and economics go hand in hand (Ramachandran). When you start from an economic approach, when you consider the economic situation to be valid in itself, where will you meet the ethical? If the problem is put in these terms, the answer is, Never (Lanza del Vasto). No society separates ethics from economics and vice versa. There is even a capitalist set of ethics (Karsz).

GANDHI'S RELEVANCE

Gandhi did not elaborate a doctrine which can be universally applied. His approach can only be understood within the framework of the social reality of India. But that does not mean that the basic premises of his conception were not for Gandhi of universal value (Uvalic). Gandhi had never said that he formulated any principles which could not be changed. All that he said was that, as far as he was concerned, they could not be changed, but that others could perhaps reinterpret them in

other ways (del Campo). Gandhi is dead if we consider that the gandhian scheme has given us a framework which can fit into all circumstances (Karsz). There is no denying that Gandhi has left his stamp on the history of our times. But it would be untrue to say that he is with us and that the world at large is following him (Farhadi). It is risky to mobilize the dead, and particularly a dead man like Gandhi, for this or that cause that is being defended today (Hersch). Gandhi had said that God did not create frontiers, but in substance the boundaries are there. I cannot travel without my passport, but inter-continental missiles do not know these frontiers. Anti-Gandhism has triumphed (Farhadi). Gandhi's originality resides in the explicitly political nature of his ethical conception (Karsz).

GANDHI'S THINKING

The concepts Gandhi uses, including those of truth and nonviolence, are not analytical concepts but synthetic ones (Lacombe). Gandhi did not develop a systematic philosophy of nonviolence (Ramachandran). Gandhi was both a theorist and a man of action (Drobyshev). As a young intellectual, Gandhi had a spiritual crisis, and it is out of this that he gradually formulated his ideology (Farhadi). Gandhi was a man who lent himself to mutation and change. By shifts and changes he tried to respond to a world in constant motion (Herzog).

There was a duality in Gandhi's approach—rigidity towards himself and his immediate disciples and extreme flexibility towards those who followed him imperfectly (Thapar). Now we should not simply believe that Gandhi refused only to wear the European coat. He did much more. He refused to carry in his thinking the notions which were widely accepted by western intellectuals (Farhadi).

GANDHI'S METHOD

What was characteristic of Gandhi's action, what made it effective, was the fact that he identified himself with a people (Eteki-Mboumoua). If Gandhi occasionally resorted to fasting as a political weapon, it was because he was convinced of the identification of his own person with that of a whole nation, a whole nation that suffered when he fasted (Eteki-Mboumoua). Without proclaiming the abolition of castes, Gandhi nevertheless compelled the average Indian to think in terms of human equality (Lacombe).

On the whole, it can be said without fear of exaggeration that the symposium, while not laying down definite lines of study for the future, has helped bring to the surface several hitherto unexamined aspects of Gandhi's life and thought which can be pursued with profit in the critical years ahead. In this sense, the symposium indeed symbolizes the new spirit of inquiry and analysis

which characterizes, or ought to characterize, Gandhi study in the seventies.

AN EXPLANATION

In any international symposium, where more than one language is spoken and some speakers feel obliged to use a language other than their own, it is natural for communication to be somewhat retarded. In such cases, the function of the editor is primarily to help reduce the retardation as much as possible. In doing so, however, he often tends to destroy the original flavour of the proceedings. A remedial attempt has been made in this book to retain the flavour without retarding the communication.

T. K. MAHADEVAN

opening session

truth and nonviolence in gandhi's humanism

14 october 1969

Rene Maheu

Every great life is an exemplary struggle. Gandhi's struggle was the struggle of man's truth against the degradation and denaturing which result from colonial status, on the one hand, and from the industrial civilization, on the other. In both cases, the method of preservation and liberation is the same: nonviolence or ahimsa.

Two aspects of Gandhi's conception and practice of nonviolence must be understood. The first has to do with the relationship between nonviolence and truth. In that relationship, truth comes first and nonviolence second: they are to one another as principle to consequence, as the end to the means. The absolute primacy of truth merges, in Gandhi's case, with his religion, which was his very being. He has often said: 'Truth is God'; 'it is the living embodiment of God'; 'it is the only life'.

From another aspect, nonviolence is the refusal to take part in, or to be associated with, any attempt forcibly to impose as truth that which is not. If violence is the supreme sin against truth, to resist it by an opposing violence is to commit the same sin and to be, likewise, irremediably lost.

Both aspects clearly reveal the instrumental character of nonviolence as compared with the absolute character of truth. And here I would quote Gandhi once more: 'Ahimsa is not the goal. Truth

 is the goal. But we have no means of realizing truth

in human relationships except through the practice of ahimsa.'[1] This is tantamount to saying that nonviolence belongs to the world of action; that it is a rule of action, a duty. In the highest sense, it is *the* rule of action. Gandhi used to say, 'Ahimsa is our supreme duty'.[2] For him, it was indeed truth in action.

Gandhi constantly stresses the practical character of nonviolence. Of himself he says: 'I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist.'[3] And again: 'I am indeed a practical dreamer. My dreams are not airy nothings. I want to convert my dreams into realities as far as possible.'[4] Indeed, what moralist, what politician in modern times has accomplished so much either within himself or in his country? As Gandhi has explained, 'the doctrine that has guided my life is not of inaction but of the highest action'.[5]

It is, of course, true that the action in question is first and foremost spiritual. But at the same time he is careful to state: 'The religion of nonviolence is not meant merely for the rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well.'[6] This is a point of cardinal importance. Herein lie Gandhi's originality and the historic importance of his example. And it is this that makes it legitimate to ask ourselves how relevant Gandhi's truth and nonviolence are to the problems of our time.

Nonviolence, which is the rejection of the rule of force over truth, is beyond all doubt a mental

withdrawal from the world and from history, since force clearly derives from history and is seen to dominate the world. This is expressed in the negative prefix of the term: *a*-himsa, *non*-violence. But to think that the achievement of this mental withdrawal demands also a physical withdrawal of the person, is to over-simplify the problem almost to the point of caricature. Nothing could be farther from the evidence of Gandhi's career. For him it is in the world and in history that the withdrawal from the historical contamination of the world, which consists in the imposition of untruth as truth, must take place—and extend to the whole of society and indeed to the whole of mankind.

This idea is of immense significance. Far from being an individual escape from the world, possible only for the heroes of the spirit—the sages and saints—gandhian nonviolence affirms the invincible immanence in the world of the multitudes subject to force and brings about in them an awakening of consciousness that opens to them the gates of history.

Everyone knows the extraordinary success achieved by this singular method, in which, for once, political skill owed nothing to hypocrisy. It won India's struggle for independence. It alone might have saved her unity by preserving her soul from religious fanaticism. Indeed it was because Gandhi might have accomplished this second liberation—more essential and more admirable than the first, for

thereby the nation would have triumphed over its own demons and its own history—that fanaticism struck him down. Occurring twelve days after his last fast had put a stop to the massacres and brought peace to Delhi, never was martyrdom more worthy to be celebrated as a witness of invincibility.

But what use is this method today?

It is true that men have not changed. They are still capable of hearing the same appeals and making the same sacrifices. Martin Luther King followed Gandhi's road to the very end. But the problems of the oppressed, although fundamentally of the same nature, are nowadays encountered in substantially different terms. I have in mind colonialism, racialism and, above all, under-development, which is the great problem of our day and which, in Gandhi's lifetime, was not yet manifest in its full extent and complexity. The oppression that is inherent in under-development results far less from the action taken by other, easily identifiable men than from the effect of pre-existing structures.

Even though Gandhi's ideas and practices do not appear to be applicable to the kind of action that would be needed to deal with under-development, it clearly does not follow that the structural changes which, to my mind, are the very essence and purpose of that action, must of necessity be brought about by violence.

The limits of the applicability of Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence, if regarded—as the ideas of great

men usually are regarded, once their authors are dead—as a set of depersonalized formulae available for use by anyone for practically any purpose, become particularly evident, it seems to me, in relation to the main problems facing the developing countries today. But when Gandhi said, 'For me, nonviolence is not a mere philosophical principle; it is the rule and breath of my life', he warned us that this principle is above all a way of life and that it has no meaning save for those who are prepared to open their lives to it.

Nothing could be more artificial, therefore, than to reduce that doctrine to an abstract idea. Gandhi's significance is the reverse of abstract. It is the imperative of an example, a simple if relentless imperative—so simple that it can scarcely be extracted by words from the depths of life in which it has its being—but a radical one, which tolerates nothing less than unconditional acceptance. No one is more demanding than this man who never gave an order.

What is this imperative? In the last analysis, and reduced to the simplest terms, it is the injunction never to assert or win one's freedom or recognition of one's dignity by behaviour that involves coercion or contempt of the man in others, be they oppressed or oppressor.

Thus, however out of touch with contemporary problems—particularly those of the developing countries—his method may appear to be in some

respects, Gandhi remains invincibly present in our most decisive actions and our most serious thoughts, to remind us that history is always concerned solely with man—that is to say, with justice—and that there can be no justice without mutual confidence and respect.

Prem Kirpal

The life of Gandhi was a life of constant action and experimentation, to know the truth and to live it according to his light, and this light never ceased to illuminate his awareness and to spread its luminosity among those with whom, and for whom, he worked—the few who shared his efforts and followed his discipline, and the millions who were touched by the strength of his faith and the loftiness of his aims and principles. A superb politician who led the masses of India to freedom and self-confidence; a constant seeker of truth who followed the path of saintliness; a teacher, in the larger sense, who keenly felt the call for instructing and uplifting his fellow-beings: these were the roles—politician, saint and teacher—which were joined together in his life.

In these several ways Gandhi developed his concept of nonviolence, and through its practice, which was full of difficulties and pitfalls, he travelled on the endless road to perfection or transcendence, from the lower levels of consciousness to the higher reaches of spiritual insight. The striving for

transcendence sums up his life; and in this ceaseless struggle and adventure of the spirit he drew upon the wisdom of the East and the West and the universal principles and values enshrined in the great religions and cultures of all mankind, as well as upon the suffering and strength of his fellow-beings and the love and compassion he bore towards them.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Gandhi, which is of urgency and relevance today, was his capacity to win the respect and even the affection of his adversaries, and to establish a dialogue with those he opposed and fought, so that reason and goodwill may emerge from the din of battle and enrich the moral awareness of both the adversaries. In this way hate could be turned to love and enmity to friendship.

Two anecdotes to illustrate this come to my mind. In 1914, at the end of his career in South Africa, Gandhi sent General Smuts the gift of a pair of sandals which he had made for him in prison. Smuts wore the sandals for many years and in 1939, on Gandhi's seventieth birthday, he returned them in friendship with the following remark: 'I have worn these sandals for many a summer even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man. It was my fate to be the antagonist of a man for whom even then I had the highest respect. He never forgot the human
 background of the situation, never lost his temper

or succumbed to hate, and preserved his gentle humour even in the most trying situations. His manner and spirit even then, as well as later, contrasted markedly with the ruthless and brutal forcefulness which is the vogue in our day.'

The second anecdote relates to the closing years of his life when he had tested and tried his new weapon of satyagraha and had succeeded in undermining the foundations of British rule in India. The might of arms on which the imperial rule rested had been shaken with the increasing tempo of the freedom movement led by the 'naked fakir', and independence was merely a question of time. Learning from Lord Mountbatten about the engagement of Princess Elizabeth, now Queen Elizabeth II, Gandhi said that he would like to send her a gift for the auspicious event. Accordingly he worked on his spinning wheel and made a table cloth for the Princess. Transmitting this gift to her, Lord Mountbatten wrote that although it was a rugged khadi cloth, it was spun with care and affection by Gandhi himself and deserved to be preserved among her most precious crown jewels. Here again, and on a larger and more momentous scale, Gandhi had succeeded in substituting dialogue and reason for conflict and violence, thus winning the respect of the adversary and cementing a lasting relationship of goodwill and friendship. History has still to unfold the immense consequences of the contact between India and Britain. It is

certain, however, that the stamp of Gandhi has given to this encounter between two different peoples and two distinct cultures a unique character in the making of civilization, the potentialities of which still remain to be studied, understood and applied to the solution of the problems of our time.

It is evident that Gandhi's teachings are relevant to the three great contemporary problems: peace, economic and social development, and the search for a new humanism. In the battle for peace, Gandhi's originality lies in the fact that the religion of nonviolence which he advocated was not only for saints and savants but for common people as well. Consequently, though nonviolence is as old as the hills, nonviolent direct action for peace is perhaps as new as Gandhi.

Just as nonviolence was inseparable from truth, development was to be inseparable from the dignity of the individual to which Gandhi was devoted all his life. The dignity of man demanded a fair deal for all human beings, the minimum of well-being in terms of education, health, food, clothing, housing and all the other essentials of material well-being. This meant that poverty, misery and wretchedness had to be eliminated by ceaseless effort.

Gandhi measured progress in terms of human happiness. He wanted a society in which every man would have equal status, opportunity and freedom to develop. He wanted a simple society in which economic progress and social justice would go

together. He was not opposed to material prosperity, nor did he reject the use of machines in all circumstances. He did not want man to become a slave of the machine and lose his identity altogether; he wanted machines to be for men, not men for machines. He disliked the waste and selfishness that are often generated by growing affluence and accumulation of wealth. If he sought for economic and social development, it was to enrich the quality of life in terms of human happiness and the quest for the moral and spiritual transcendence of man.

Self-reliance dictated his essential approach to development, yet self-sufficiency was not to be aimed at to the exclusion of international cooperation. The relevance of this approach is evident today. For, ideally, the developed and the developing countries should be partners and comrades in common tasks contributing to the increasing solidarity of mankind. In order to make development meaningful for the whole of humanity, we must strive to impart a moral character to the acts of giving and receiving in the material world; the success of this effort will lead us to the road towards a new humanism.

According to Gandhi, we must do everything possible to develop a feeling for the oneness of mankind through reverence for the spirit of man and the practice of the great virtue of compassion. This will indeed be the surest foundation of the new humanism, deriving its strength from all great religions and traditions, gaining from the scientific

spirit of our times, and becoming ultimately something like a new religion of the future. With truth and nonviolence as his guiding stars, man was Gandhi's recurring theme.

May I put forward a concrete suggestion for a long-term program that Unesco might adopt as an appropriate follow-up of the Gandhi Centenary Year? The concept of life-long integrated education is now widely accepted by educationalists all over the world and it is proposed to highlight it in 1970, the International Education Year. The concept of life-long integrated education is, no doubt, sound and timely. It will surely extend and enrich the educational process and produce skills and attitudes needed for development. The program is, however, mainly formulated in pedagogical terms and emphasizes coordinating measures and machinery for establishing links and relationships between different stages, levels and types of education. All this is necessary, but it lacks a focus and a driving objective to catch the imagination of the people and to impart to the program a character of universality. Such a focus and overall objective could be the eradication of violence in all its forms from the functioning of society and the make-up of the individual, in order to strengthen cooperation and harmony. Conflicts and disorders multiply everywhere and violence increases daily. In despair, many sensitive and thoughtful people resign themselves to the doom that threatens humanity

and even accept the view that violence and self-destruction are rooted in the nature of man. Such a view of human nature would be absolutely contrary to the faith of Gandhi, and his own example of life-long education or moral transcendence bears testimony to the soundness of his belief which he put into action with spectacular success. Nonviolence is admittedly difficult to achieve; one has to confess in sadness and sorrow its failure in Gandhi's own country, India, where senseless acts of violence take place as often as anywhere else. This does not, however, prove that Gandhi's message is impracticable; it only underlines its importance and urgency.

Unesco's efforts to renew and transform the quality of education can be directed to the task of eradicating violence by the right use of educational methods, content and objectives. The training of teachers and the preparation of educational materials should be geared to this end, and the new technologies of communication and instruction should be utilized for this purpose. A start could be made in the International Education Year by launching suitable studies, teaching materials and pilot projects; such a program of action would join together the basic aims of peace, development and humanism, and bring about a new orientation of education and culture which is the essence of life-long integrated education. It will satisfy the yearnings of youth and give them new hope and

faith. Is it too much to hope that the centenary celebration of the birth of Gandhi will be followed by actions and deeds that would bring us nearer to his vision of nonviolence, truth and charity?

William Eteki-Mboumoua

Some messages are like seeds: to sprout, to proliferate, they must find a place in a soil that is propitious to them. Thus is it with the gandhian message, which, even if it had not been born and evolved in Africa, was assured a very special echo in this continent. Was Gandhi already aware of this when he said prophetically in 1935: 'It may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world'?[7]

My homage will, in a way, be a homage from Africa, for the lessons taught by Gandhi inspire both yesterday's Africa—that of its sons torn away from their soil to water distant lands and to enrich them through their sweat and blood—and the Africa of today which desires to live in dignity and recommence a 'new history of man'.

Africa is, in reality, the mirror which, by the side of India, can best reflect the agonizing antagonism that Gandhi had lived through and which he dreamt passionately of subjugating—namely, the existence, on the one hand, of a society in which violence is triumphant, pervasive and arrogant; and the presence, on the other hand, of men who keep intact

within them the power to love, who have a love for justice and truth, and whose souls, though stifled and obliterated, are yet not destroyed. The men of Africa bear witness to the perennial value of Gandhi's message, which it would be wrong to consider as being nothing but an empty vision. In fact, it is among these 'Wretched of the Earth', who during the long course of a cruel history of organized dehumanization have undergone slavery, segregation, imperialism and absolute violence, that the teachings of Gandhi—that 'champion of all victims of racial oppression or discrimination'—still continue to prevail.

It was Martin Luther King who dared, in an America where every shred of humanity seems to have vanished for some, to proclaim his 'Strength to Love'. It was Luthuli who, in manicheistic, compartmentalized South Africa, raised his voice, moving in its sincerity, in a call for brotherhood and love. It is Kaunda, whose Zambia is immersed in the hell of racialism, who has not only adopted 'Social Christianity' as his guide for political action, but who has made himself the pilgrim of brotherhood and peace throughout the world.

It is true that between these men and Gandhi, there existed a spiritual bond: for they too had meditated on the 'Sermon on the Mount' and could say with Gandhi, 'God is truth and love; God is ethics and morality'.[8] But even outside the sphere where faith serves as a bond of affinity, Gandhi's

message, in so far as it constitutes a harmonized and humanized approach to a strategy of economic, social and cultural development, continues to prevail in Africa, which, like Gandhi's India, is groping among the choice of paths available to put an end to its under-developed state but cannot, alas, boast of having made a success of its first decade of decolonization.

Gandhi's message rightly calls on us to oppose 'the violence which is characteristic of colonial situations and which inevitably leads to the destruction of indigenous social forces, patterns of economy, ways of living and even dress manners' and to bring about a decolonization that would constitute a total reappraisal of the colonial situation.

When Gandhi advocates the use of the spinning wheel to give villagers a lucrative occupation and when he exalts manual work, how can one not consider him as the visionary forerunner of the programs of rural development and the campaigns for manpower investment which are the recurrent themes of the development plans of Africa today?

What some have called the 'villagism' of Gandhi finds today, in an African country which is building its future in great earnest—Tanzania—a rational application. It is what President Nyerere has spelt out vigorously in his 'Arusha Declaration of 1967', as being the sole means of attaining 'self-reliance'.

 When Nyerere evokes the 'rejection of the concept

of grandeur if it goes against the well-being of citizens' and affirms that 'when the search for well-being comes in conflict with social dignity and equality, priority must then be given to the latter', it almost seems as if one were hearing Gandhi's own words: 'The sole interest of economics is not economic development, but the development of the human being'.

India, Africa and the host of poor and impoverished countries are finding themselves, alas, under the sway of an international society which refuses to be bound to them in solidarity, and a civilization which Gandhi denigrated for 'its adoration of the brute in us, its adoration of matter, and its unmixed materialism'. The countries of the third world are condemned to stagnation because of the egoism and immorality of the industrialized nations. The economic patterns set up by the colonial regimes have become firmly entrenched. And all attempts at a just organization of world trade have met with failure. Let us therefore beware. For if, as is to be feared, the economic inequalities between the prosperous and the under-developed countries continue to increase, the latter could perhaps render the greatest tribute to the message of Gandhi by undertaking a collective drive for self-sufficiency, so that the pre-arranged masquerades of Geneva, New Delhi and Algiers become meetings which may lead to the 'building of a new civilization, a civilization of solidarity

constructed on the basis of dialogue'. This modern 'ahimsa' would undoubtedly make the egoists understand that 'we are all aboard a ship beaten by the storm, and if it flounders, it is not the third-class passengers alone who will perish'.

Fundamentally, it is the rehabilitation of man that is at stake, his breaking-away from the bonds of slavery, the triumph of man everywhere, once and for all. And it is of this that the cultural message of Gandhi reminds us; now, more than ever before, it invites us to undertake a veritable cultural revolution. For, as was said by the late Franz Fanon, who never claimed to be a follower of nonviolence but who was essentially at one with the thinking of Gandhi: 'Decolonization relates to the being of man, it modifies him fundamentally, it transforms mere spectators crushed under non-essentials, into privileged actors, caught in a grandiose manner in the limelight of history. It introduces into their being a new rhythm, brought about by new men, a new language and a new humanity.' The cultural revolution to be undertaken must therefore bring about the birth of new men, men who are totally unalienated, understanding the necessity of freeing themselves, of transforming human nature, ready to participate in the revolution of the mind and to organize progress, through access to techniques and to science, in order to attain a conscious and total mastery over our destiny.

 This cultural revolution must, more than ever

before—and Gandhi realized this—merge with the educational revolution, bringing about, necessarily, a radical restructuring of the philosophy of education. Our aim should be to build schools that are enriched and rendered more dynamic by the study and teaching of our languages, our ethics, and our beliefs.

To go back to the deep thoughts of Gandhi, let us say with Fanon that 'for Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, we must turn over a new leaf, we must evolve a new thought, we must attempt to create a new man'.

Gandhi was this new man—and passionately so; and he taught us how to be likewise. He believed purely and simply in man—'not just an ideal man, without moorings, without roots, but a sensible and dedicated man; not a recluse but a builder of society; not a man accumulating riches, but a "poet", that is to say, a creator; not a dreamer, but a man of responsibility; not a philosopher despising science or a scientist despising philosophy, but a man capable of going the whole way, to the very end of reason, while being conscious of his limits'.

S. Chakravarti

In essence, Gandhi's life and work were based on loyalty to a few simple but eternal principles—humanism as expressed in nonviolence and truth, the exaltation of means over ends, and the stress on

duty rather than rights. Justice to him was devotion to the cause of the oppressed, and liberty connoted duty more than rights. These principles provided the key to his conception of the art of life, which derived its strength and sustenance from a strong moral foundation.

As Louis Fischer put it: 'Gandhi enriched politics with ethics. He faced each morning's issues in the light of eternal and universal values. He always distilled a permanent element out of the ephemeral. Gandhi thus broke through the framework of usual assumptions which cramp a man's action. He discovered a new dimension of action. Unconfined by considerations of personal success or comfort, he split the social atom and found a new source of energy. It gave him weapons of attack against which there was often no defence. His greatness lay in doing what everybody could do but doesn't.'

Indeed Gandhi believed that everybody could do what he had done. 'You are as strong as you think you are', he would say, 'you are as strong as I am'. This faith in the ordinary man is what illumines the path for us in the future. For his message is to all of us, to each one of us; and its burden is that the common man can yet reassert his humanism if he has faith in his cause.

Gandhi's conception of sarvodaya signifies the welfare and service of all. A good life for all and not just for the majority provides the test. In the society of Gandhi's dreams, the most needy will be

provided for and none will be forgotten or allowed to feel lost. 'Unto this last': even the least will be cared for. This grand dream of the emancipation of man had other facets also.

Ruskin's *Unto this Last,* which Gandhi read in 1904, denounced classical economists for not conceiving economics in terms of human welfare and accused industrialism of being responsible for intensifying poverty and injustice. These ideas found a ready response in Gandhi's mind. The ideal of a simple life and the stress on manual work took on their true significance in his quest. He found that though science and technology had given a new turn to the wheel of production and wealth, men were not only not emancipated, but were in fact being exploited. To Gandhi man himself was the cause of his own exploitation, because he had created machines and a huge centralized structure, and thus both in the political and economic fields, man had defeated man. He, therefore, called for a review of the old assumptions and for a reassessment of the scale of values. His emphasis on simplicity and limitation of wants, his stress on decentralization and participation by the common man in the decision-making process at various levels, his call to men to work with joy, his emphasis on a united but not a uniform world—all this has a current relevance.

The quintessence of Gandhi's humanism, on the political and cultural side, will be found in his following two observations: 'I look upon an

increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear because, while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of progress.'[9] 'I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.... Mine is not the religion of the prison house. It has room for the least among God's creation. But it is proof against insolence, pride of race, religion or colour.'[10]

If Gandhi's end was the service of the last man and the participation of everyone in his own governance, in a vast human brotherhood—whatever the means to be used—he found the answer in the search for truth, but a search which was impossible without nonviolence.

In its positive connotation, nonviolence means, as Radhakrishnan puts it, 'love' and 'truth', while in its negative connotation it means the absence of anger and hatred. Nonviolence thus provides the motive force for social change and the dynamics for the struggle towards revolutionary transformation. Gandhi's concept of nonviolence was 'harmony' and not 'conflict'. It was 'love' and 'service' and not 'profit' and 'competition'. He thus came to reject several central theses of his time, such as that all economic activity is for profit and all politics for

 power and that 'conflict' provides the seed-bed of

change and the basis of revolution. On the other hand, he envisaged a different process of dynamism, an altogether new 'motive' for social action and a new rationale for change. Nonviolence provides this new interpretation of the societal process and a new turn to contemporary history. 'I am a social revolutionist', Gandhi asserted. 'Violence is bred by inequality, nonviolence by equality.' Thus truth and nonviolence meant to him the emancipation of man, the re-awakening of his inner self and the pursuit of collective prosperity.

The twentieth century has been described as the age of violence and Gandhi symbolizes a profound challenge to this trend. Does it mean that society, where the new process is to culminate, will become an idyllic Utopia? The answer is, No. Gandhi's ideals only lead to a 'normal' or 'moral' society, where certain basic norms and mores would play their dominant role and other artificial pressures would be removed. Nor has such a society to be primitive or to aim at 'peace' at all costs. For he had decried the 'unmanly' peace of the grave, the doubtful virtues that cowardice flaunts, and the timid man's cravings for stability.

Gandhi wanted a vertical movement to be manifest everywhere in society, through the regeneration of the weakest. Developmental stimuli would enable the weakest to grow and to act as a catalyst for the 'last man'. Gandhi's nonviolent society would thus overturn the social pyramid and bring the

downtrodden and the poor into a position of reciprocal relationship with the rest.

Such a society would be truly nonviolent, as centralized controls and pressures are reduced to a minimum and a decentralized institutional frame provides the physical contour. However, this new social reality will have to be evident both in the political and in the economic system.

Gandhi's basic position was that the process of change must grow upwards, not through the fear of annihilation of the exploiters—the negative stimulus for change—but by the positive realization of the individual and social conscience. When all men reach this conscience through a process of self-development, they reach their 'truth'. Gandhi was thus the harbinger of a new social system. Made of this earth, his objectives were earthy and man-oriented and his system was related to social reality.

The central truth for which Gandhi lived and died represents the main search of contemporary society for a new pattern of living where men are on their own and are not enslaved by others—whether it be by men, social systems, institutions or machines. His culture of nonviolence is indeed the ultimate objective towards which the whole human culture will have to grow.

In his Gandhi Memorial Lecture 1963, Martin Luther King eloquently affirmed: 'Violence is
 unpractical because the old eye-for-eye philosophy

ends up leaving everybody blind. This method is wrong. This method is immoral. It is immoral because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for everybody. It is wrong because it seeks to annihilate the opponent rather than convert him.'

We can best honour Gandhi by renewing our faith in man's quest for individuality, world peace and the preservation of the spirit which prizes liberty and justice as the 'heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere'.

Philip Noel-Baker

A hundred years ago tonight, a dark-skinned baby lay sleeping in his cot in a coastal town on the shores of the Arabian sea. His family were important; his father was Prime Minister of the state; his father's father had been Prime Minister, too; his mother thought that some day, perhaps, the baby might follow in their steps. Power and status were the family's due. But the principality which they helped to govern was a tiny strip of land; its people numbered 70,000; its monarch was an Indian prince, entitled to an 11-gun salute, but subject in all important matters to the dictates of a foreign power. It was a part, a small, poor and unimportant part of the greatest empire the world had ever seen.

Twenty-eight years later, in 1897, a British schoolboy went to London to see the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen. Long years later, he described

the glorious pageant: 'There was the Old Queen, with a great retinue of Kings'; 'there were Indian Princes and Prime Ministers'; 'there followed the contingents of imperial troops, black men, yellow men, white men, from all parts of the far-flung Empire, marching past in tribute to the little old lady who ruled for 60 years over a quarter of the world'. The schoolboy went at night to see the bonfires blazing on the hills. It was a memorable day; it marked the highest point imperialism was ever to achieve.

The dark-skinned baby was Gandhi, the illustrious leader who was to liberate the subject peoples of the world. The schoolboy was Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister of Britain who gave India the nationhood that was so rightly hers. Gandhi and Attlee were the men, above all others, who transformed the greatest empire in history into the Commonwealth—which we think greater still.

In 1897, so Attlee told us, he was an ardent imperialist—he accepted Kipling's vision of the White Man's burden. So, strangely, did Gandhi. In 1897 Gandhi belonged to a committee which prepared the celebrations of Victoria's Jubilee.

Two years later there came a harsher test of his loyalty to the Empire and the Queen. He was then the leader of the Indians in Natal. He was faced by the dilemma of the war between the British and the Boers. He did not hesitate: he had claimed the rights of a British citizen; he must fulfil his duties, too.

Being a pacifist, he raised an Indian ambulance, 1100 strong, to help the British soldiers in the field. His Indians were brave and strong; they stood the test of long marches, and of long battles under shot and shell. Gandhi himself received a medal for valour under fire.

Two years later, Queen Victoria died; Gandhi laid a wreath on her statue in the capital of Natal.

Now 30 years of age, Gandhi was the leader of the Indians in South Africa; he had created a Congress Party far stronger than the Congress Party in India itself and his name was known already in India, in Britain and elsewhere.

How had he achieved this great distinction? No statesman ever had so strange a start to his career. It happened, not in a politicians' caucus, not in a parliament, but in a railway train.

He had come to the British Colony of Natal to conduct a lawsuit between two Indian merchants, in which large sums of money were involved. He had to travel to see the second merchant, and his employer had given him a first-class ticket for the train. But in the evening, at a wayside station, a rich white Sahib came on board.

The Sahib was enraged to find a 'Coolie' in the compartment he wanted for himself. He called the guard; he called the police; and Gandhi was bundled, with his luggage, from the train. It was 9 o'clock, and a moonless winter night, with savage

 cold. Gandhi spent it in the unheated, draughty

waiting-room, with no food, no blankets, nowhere to lie down.

Other men would have seethed with anger at the insult, the discomfort, the fatigue, so brutally imposed. Such thoughts never crossed his mind. He was filled with sheer amazement at the fact of racist hate. In that bitter waiting-room, the statesman-leader of the subject peoples found the mission of his life. There began the greatest movement of our times—the demand for equal rights, dignity and honour for all people, of whatever colour, race, religion they might be. Gandhi felt no counter-hate as he shivered through that night—indeed, he always called it 'the most creative passage of my life'. Henceforth, he would work for the poor, for the dishonoured, for the oppressed.

Gandhi was inspired, as few men are inspired, by religion. 'Religion', he said, 'should pervade every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in the ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.'[11]

Dynamic truth and constructive nonviolence were the motive principles of the great campaigns he led. He was inspired by religion, but he called himself a politician. We recall his idealism, his imprisonments and his fasts but we forget the astounding political

and administrative gifts which created the Congress Party of South Africa, which transformed the Congress Party of his native land, and which swept the teeming millions of his compatriots into its loyal and passionate support.

As his power and his experience broadened he came to see, as Attlee saw, that imperialism must disappear. But it was not against imperialism only, nor against British dominance alone, that he revolted. He attacked no less the evils of his native land: the caste system, untouchability, the corruption of big business, the grinding poverty of Indian villages, the deadly conflict of Muslim and Hindu.

Broadly, in all his great campaigns, he triumphed. And always the simplicity, the magnanimity of his mind shed radiance even on sordid scenes.

It was thanks to Gandhi's generosity of mind that India won her freedom by nonviolent means, with mutual respect and even admiration on both sides. And still today, India is a member of the Commonwealth, of which our Queen is the acknowledged Head. He rendered a service to the British people which we can never repay.

How should we think of Gandhi now, a hundred years after he was born? First, no man or woman, in any age of human history, has won such deep devotion from so many people while he was still alive. To hundreds of millions in India, to countless millions more in Asia, to millions in Britain, in

Europe and elsewhere, Gandhi, before he died, had become a saint, a prophet, a leader and a much-loved friend. The men who killed him thought they had destroyed his power when their murderous bullets pierced his gentle heart. But Confucius shaped and guided China for 2400 years. It was four centuries after the crucifixion that Christ's teachings began to permeate the Roman world.

Gandhi's work was not ended by the assassins in 1948. Perhaps, indeed, it is only just beginning now. More than ever we need the power of truth. All the major governments pay lip-service to the United Nations. But all have played their part in making its Charter a scrap of paper in the last 15 years. Only truth can bring us the new start we need.

Gandhi's greatest grief was the grinding poverty of the Indian village; he saw it as true violence against the simple people, Hindu and Muslim, whom he loved. So, for us, world poverty is violence against the developing nations of the world. We know that hunger—the hunger of 2000 millions—preventible disease, illiteracy, could all be ended in a decade if the affluent nations would provide the resources that are required. For a small percentage of what we spend on war, world poverty could be ended in a few years' time.

No man in any age spoke with such relevance, with such insight, with such realism, of the problems of the world he knew. He pierced the web of lies with
 which our militarism hides its menace to the human

race. He exposed the arrogance, the carelessness, the greed, which allowed, and still allows, the waste, the folly, and the crime of world poverty to go on.

We need Gandhi's truth, Gandhi's nonviolence, far more today than when he died. Gandhi's murder did not end his work. Indeed, his death proved the greatest of his triumphs. One of the best of Gandhi's friends, one of the noblest of India's noble women, found a group of friends weeping over the lifeless body his assassins had destroyed. 'What is all this snivelling?' she indignantly exclaimed. 'Would you rather he died of old age or indigestion? This is the only death great enough for him.' He died for his beliefs; he died that cruelty and oppression might be ended; he died for the lasting friendship of Muslims and Hindus. He died for the peace and reconciliation of all the nations of the world.

But since he died, the mushroom clouds of atom bombs have been the writing on the wall of heaven. They have posed a question which we have still to answer: *Did Gandhi die in vain?*

Edmond Michelet

Gandhi—two syllables that resound, oh! so differently, to the youth of today from the way they resounded to the youth of my generation. Let us be frank about it. For most people of the West—with some rare exceptions, such as Romain Rolland or Louis Massignon—mention of the name of Gandhi

gave rise to sarcastic and sceptical remarks by both gentlemen and fools; and it was not before a truly prodigious concatenation of circumstances took place that, little by little, the teachings of Gandhi penetrated into each one of us.

Gandhi—I can still recall the photographs appearing in magazines and newspapers of the period between the two wars. I see him again as those of my generation saw him, dressed in his dhoti, spinning his wheel, collecting salt from the seashore, setting an example that, little by little, we ended up by understanding. Gandhi—a wondrous name, one of those names which, as the poet puts it, make men better simply at their thought.

Let us analyse, very briefly, the great periods of his life, let us see a little in what way Gandhi commands our attention today and how he has become the personality of whom people talk with such serenity and whose teachings have begun to attract more and more followers. Here we must not confuse those who practise nonviolence with those who practise resistance; passive resistance, according to Gandhi, was a tactic, and there is as much difference between passive resistance and nonviolence, as there is between the North Pole and the South Pole.

Let us examine this prophet a little—a prophet in the strictest biblical sense of the word. It is a mistake to assume—and I speak here as a Roman Catholic—that the only prophets are those who

have been listed as such; assuredly, Gandhi, was a very authentic prophet, and the lessons that he taught us can, it seems to me, be expressed in a few words.

First of all, sacrifice. The first sacrifice that one notes in his life is the one where, without protesting and with that indefinable smile adorning his face, he exposed himself to that icy cold night on a station platform whose name has now passed into legend, in order to express his opposition to an injustice. Then there are the sacrifices in the form of his numerous fasts and prison terms. Let me recall here an incident which threw me into a turmoil when I first heard it. One of the last visitors—this was in 1947—told me that, on meeting him and seeing him so thin and emaciated, he said to him: 'Why, you look like the inmates of the concentration camps I visited just last year at Dachau'. 'Ah', replied Gandhi, 'I have been told that I also resemble those that are called Muslims in India. Well, I have never been paid such a compliment before.'

Sacrifice, therefore, and that too instructive sacrifice, in an era when sacrifice was not the order of the day and was not fully understood by those we call the masses. Sacrifice that includes, let me say very frankly, total continence, a word which may appear ridiculous in our present-day world—a world which the West would sometimes appear to represent and which has many similarities to the underworld!

A second aspect of the man that should be underlined is that Gandhi was a man of religion. And although his religion was the religion of his own country, he has become a truly universal man who can claim a place in the pantheon of the great anywhere in the world. Nevertheless Gandhi would not have been what he is, what we admire in him, if he had not been the faithful son of his motherland, of India, of his forebears. This again is a factor deserving of our thought.

Although we are only a few hundred persons assembled here this evening in this hall of Unesco, let there be no doubt that we should rally in our thousands to proclaim the heroic virtues of the Mahatma. And it is our duty to act in such a way (and I repeat here the conclusion of Mr Noel-Baker) that his example should not have been in vain, and that our great-grand-children after us, when they read the history of the years which will have followed our era, should place Gandhi among the small number of people who have changed the course of humanity and who, to put it in a nutshell, have made men better.

first working session

the relations of truth and nonviolence in gandhi's thinking

15 october 1969

chairman: olivier lacombe

After a brief discussion of the preliminaries, the Chairman, Professor Olivier Lacombe, read out from the Working Document of the Symposium (see Appendix) the preamble[a] to the day's theme and asked for comments.

G. Ramachandran

This concept of truth, as it has emerged from Gandhi, requires much more careful study than is probably often given to it. There is no commoner word in all the languages of the world than truth. The first thing we tell our children is to speak the truth. But as Nehru once said of Gandhi, he could take up something very common and make it into something very uncommon.

Truth, as Gandhi saw it, must be understood against a particular background. Gandhi profoundly believed in God and for a long time, for almost three-fourths of his life, he used to say: God is truth. But later he reversed the order and said:

a. 'Since truth and nonviolence are related terms, it would help first of all to understand what meaning they had for Gandhi. The mere fact of their being linked would seem to suggest that truth and nonviolence are not to be thought of as general concepts, but that truth is what expresses itself in nonviolent action and nonviolence is what advances the cause of truth.'

Truth is God. If God for Gandhi was truth and later he deliberately changed the definition and said, Truth is God, then apparently, in his mind, this word truth was more unassailable and comprehensive and included God. This might sound nonsensical: how can there be anything more than God? I remember Nehru once saying: 'So long as Gandhi was talking about God, I did not fully know what he meant. But now when he says that truth is God, I understand him better.' Truth, therefore, is not just facts, although a fact, which nobody can deny, is also truth. One both speaks the truth and acts the truth. All these are microscopic fractions of the totality of truth which Gandhi had in mind when he said that truth is God.

Gandhi has said, 'Not a dead leaf is lifted by the wind from where it lies and is dropped elsewhere except at the will of God'.[12] When you examine this statement you realize that Gandhi's God was an immanent God, present and vibrant in every atom of the universe, self-evolving from within, guiding, directing and growing. It is this God that becomes truth. The whole process of cosmic life gets embedded in the idea of Gandhi's truth.

Prem Purachatra

In a letter to Nehru, written on 5 October 1945, Gandhi has said: 'I hold that without truth and nonviolence, there can be nothing but destruction

for humanity'. Although it is not a definition, I think it gives us a clear idea of how much importance Gandhi attached to truth and nonviolence. In fact, he placed so much importance on them that they became, in his eyes, absolute essentials for humanity.

Arne Naess

There are several uses of the word truth in the writings of Gandhi. You have, first of all, the ontological use, where truth is what really is. Here truth is God. This should be kept apart from the commonplace use of truth, as when we say, 'Snow is white'. Then we have the personological[b] concept, where to find truth is to act selflessly and honestly, in a consistent way. And sometimes Gandhi also uses the term truth as shorthand for true faith, as Christians often do. We can thus distinguish four or five senses of truth in the writings of Gandhi. It would lead us astray if we took all kinds of truth, like chemical or physiological truth, as fractions of the truth that is God. Clarity requires that we keep track of each use of the term in Gandhi's writings.

b. The terms 'personological' and 'personalism' are used in philosophy for points of view taking the 'person' rather than the subject, ego or individual as a basic category (Mounier, Marcel a.o.).

Lanza del Vasto

Should I try to give a definition of truth which would cover all these shades of meaning, I would say: 'The outside as the inside'. It is obvious that with the inside of others we have no direct contact, but only through the outside. We have contact with the inside only within ourselves. Thus, to live and to be in truth means that our appearances and our actions should correspond to what we have within us. I think that from this definition we can derive all the other connotations of truth.

Jeanne Hersch

I understand what Professor Naess wishes to do in separating the various meanings of truth. I also understand Dr Lanza del Vasto when he tries to find a synthesis from which one could derive all these senses. But I feel that what is peculiar to Gandhi is that, whether one speaks of nonviolence and truth in general terms or whether one tries to be more precise, one cannot do so by being exclusive or by restricting the field. When one formulates a definition, one excludes certain things in order to make the definition as narrow as possible. With Gandhi I think it cannot be done, for then one loses Gandhi. In other words, I feel that one can understand the gandhian sense of truth only by keeping it closely linked to the sense of

sincerity, of truthfulness. That is to say, the gandhian sense of truth cannot be dissociated from the quality of the person who is speaking and who has to be sufficiently pure to understand truth and to speak it. Gandhian words spoken by someone else, who has not the same purity, would lose the meaning that they have in Gandhi. That is what makes any discussion of truth so difficult. If discussion were easy, it would mean that it is quite enough to be intelligent, which is not the case. We can never speak of Gandhi without trying at least to be in the thought of Gandhi. Therefore, we cannot isolate any one of these senses, nor can we make an overall synthesis, independent of each one of us.

Walpola Rahula Thero

On the relation between truth and nonviolence, I wish to draw your attention to the Buddhist conception. Just as Gandhi used the word truth for God, so in the Buddhist texts, the Buddha equates truth with nirvana. Instead of using the term nirvana, he uses the term truth.

Realization of truth, according to Buddhism, is through wisdom (prajna) and nonviolence, wisdom being impossible without nonviolence, love and detachment, i.e. self-abnegation. In detailed discussions, Gandhi has shown that nonviolence too is impossible without self-abnegation. According to

 Buddhism also, nonviolence or love is impossible

without self-abnegation, i.e. without giving up selfishness. There is no idea of self in love.

According to Buddhism, prajna or wisdom is never associated with violence, hatred or illwill. Of course, we have to understand the difference between ordinary intelligence and what we call wisdom in this context. Without a certain amount of intelligence and technical skill, it is not possible to produce instruments of destruction like bombs, but then that is not wisdom.

Gandhi was a devoted and sincere follower of the Buddha and his teachings. He followed the Buddha's teachings not as a scholar but as a devoted follower and practitioner. He often said, 'Scholars interpret the Buddha's teachings in their own learned ways, but in my life and practice, I understand him differently'. I believe, the relationship between truth and nonviolence in Gandhi is exactly as it has been taught by the Buddha.

William Eteki-Mboumoua

I think the speakers who have already taken the floor have delimited the question that we are discussing. I feel rather—and Gandhi must have said it somewhere—that truth is the very substance of morality, an opening out to every virtuous action, everything good and great, everything that tends to bring man to any form of virtuous

achievement. It is difficult to analyse and explain this, but it can be deeply felt; and I think Gandhi felt it through his inner voice.

It is never easy to find a definition when referring to the moral aspect of things. In this respect, truth and nonviolence become almost synonymous, because nonviolence participates in the same way in this movement towards the achievement of becoming better—and becoming God, if you like, God being truth and vice versa. It is difficult to find a definition, but taken in the moral context, through infinite perfection one can achieve this identity between truth and nonviolence.

Miloslav Krasa

I agree with what Professor Hersch has said. No doubt Gandhi has left us a noble message of thought, but he has also left us the message of his life, where everything he did was closely related to the live problems of his society. Being a complex personality, it would be more helpful to view him from the background of his own life in order to discover the truth behind what he taught and what he did.

It seems to me that, in Gandhi's conception, truth was always very concrete, very evident and, somehow, very simple. I think he almost never looked upon truth as some sort of objective law

 governing the society in which he lived, but rather

as the very concrete and evident truths of everyday life. On the other hand, I think he considered nonviolence to be a governing principle of society, something which is connected with human beings, as against the law of the jungle. This difference between his conception of truth as something concrete, unique and evident and his conception of nonviolence as something existential and human is what we should try to understand in Gandhi's teaching.

Yahia El-Khachab

I want to emphasize the point that in order to understand truth in Gandhi, we should follow Gandhi's conduct in life. He was truthful in his principles and in everything that he planned and propagated. For example, having based his policy on the people, on the poor masses, he dressed as the poor were clothed, ate as they ate and lived as they lived. He did not set before others any ideal or truth without first practising it himself. Sometimes we may find that the truths which Gandhi taught are far from being immediately practicable, but we should not on that account leave them, rather we should try to go closer to them.

Take, for example, the distribution of land to the landless. Gandhi said, 'I would very much like that the rich should leave their surplus land to the poor, but without bloodshed'. If this is far from the

reality and will not be realized in our time, it may nevertheless be realized later. He said, 'If I have more than I want, it will be against truth'. And then he went on to adopt this idea and lived always within the limits of what he wanted. As Dr Lanza del Vasto said earlier, Gandhi's exterior or appearance—what we call in the Arabic language al-zahir—is the same as Gandhi's interior, the al-batin. The two sides, the outside and the inside of his life, were the same. When we speak of truth in Gandhi, we should examine and follow Gandhi's own conduct and see how truthful he was in relation to the truths that he propagated.

Romesh Thapar

I feel that it is essential to our discussion that we see Gandhi against the sweep of history and in the context of his Indian being. We should, as far as possible, avoid an approach that treats him as a saint. I belong to a generation which was deeply influenced by the gandhian era. I would therefore prefer to see him in the setting of his political leadership, which was unique in many respects, but particularly in terms of ends and means.

The thinking man in Asia and Africa has been the victim of a series of traumatic experiences, direct and otherwise. These experiences either reduced him to voiceless servitude or they created in him a fertilizing ferment of revolt. Interestingly enough,

Gandhi seesawed between these two positions; and in our moments of truth we know that we too have seesawed between these two positions. In this sense, Gandhi was typical of his generation—the generation that rose to consciousness in the ugly years of the first world war and in the revolutionary echoes of October 1917. It is important to understand this historical setting.

I think Gandhi realized early in life that a mechanical, unthinking approach to the problems of oppressed peoples, particularly in the extremely complex societies of the Indian sub-continent, would be self-destructive. He therefore sought for meaningful alternatives which would be an integral part of his fundamental humanism.

Gandhi was a humanist, shall we say, from his first moment of self-consciousness. It is only natural, therefore, that in his search for a philosophy of action he should immerse himself in the extraordinary richness of Hindu thought. I do not want to sound like a chauvinist, but I see in Gandhi an efflorescence of some of the finest concepts of Hinduism. Therefore, in discussing Gandhi, Hinduism is a vital element and we should not run away from it—the Hinduism that is a civilized, humane way of living, not a ritual-encrusted system or something based on the edicts of rigid law-givers.

Gandhi's innate humanism discovered in Hinduism two basic streams of thought. First, the unending search for truth. 'You are God', said the

texts; 'be true to yourself'. This is the internal and the external. Only you are the judge of truth. In other words, the quantum of untruth in you is the quantum of your failure to be true to yourself. This is one of the sublimated philosophical points in Hinduism which Gandhi absorbed.

The second stream, as already pointed out by the Venerable Rahula Thero, is the power of the commitment to nonviolence which the Buddha had bequeathed to the land of his birth. These two concepts, truth and nonviolence, truth from Hinduism and nonviolence from Buddhism, Gandhi saw as being intensely relevant to our universe.

But these two great streams had to be brought together and forged into a weapon of action; for without action, as Gandhi knew, there could be no change and nothing would survive. That weapon for change was satyagraha—a nonviolent act of truth, where the individual becomes a part of the collective, where personal salvation is in the salvation of the community, where moral force conditions the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, and where no final answers are asserted but only an end is pursued. The small voice within joins in a moment of truth other small voices; the ends and means fuse, enriching each other. In other words, the general philosophy becomes an ethic of political action.

Truth and nonviolence, in the context of Hindu philosophy, are concepts which are necessarily

different from what they would be when placed in the setting of the Christian ethic. I think we must be frank and honest in accepting this difference. Hinduism, for example, does not nurture itself in eternal rights and wrongs. Its philosophy lies in the grey land between the black and white of right and wrong. Only if we look upon Gandhi's thought in this setting will we be true to him and be able to understand the contradictions, ambivalences, dogmatisms and commitments of one who never ceased his experiments. This was the essence of his life, and unless I see it in this light I shall not find an approach to the man.

Yasuaki Nara

I should like to clarify the meaning of the word truth from a slightly different angle. It is said in Hinduism, in the tradition of which Gandhi lived, that truth is one. Although I agree with what is meant by the phrase, I think it is nevertheless slightly misleading on account of the vagueness of the definition of the word truth. Every religion tries to understand not only the reality of man but also the reality of the universe as it has existed from time immemorial, regardless of how it is grasped by man. This reality is a factual force, but it remains a mere fact unless one grasps it in the form of truth.

In other words, religions approach and grasp it in the form of truth, each in its own way, although

the reality behind the truth remains unchanged. The truth is seen differently by them because of their different ways of apprehending the reality. Thus every religion can have its own philosophical basis in which to sustain itself. And as there is a multiplicity of religions in the world, so there is a plurality of truths. But as long as each truth is deeply rooted in the reality of man and the universe, it evokes a response in others, regardless of their religious background. There is thus no need for one religion to fight another in order to insist on its own truth.

It can also be said that truth remains a mere concept so long as it is only discussed and analysed in philosophical terms. Whereas in religion it is the whole of reality that one tries to grasp by way of practising or experiencing truth. In the case of Gandhi, his approach to reality is seen to be religious rather than philosophical, when he says that God is love, that truth is God, and that moral disciplines are derived from the laws of truth and love. He approached reality through nonviolence, in a way that was both ethical and practical.

Arne Naess

I think that, politically, the differences between the various uses of truth are extremely important. Gandhi insisted that truth is what the voice within tells you. It has to do with being in truth—in terms

of Kierkegaard—with being truthful, and so on; but it has not to do with factual truth. And yet the greatness of Gandhi is in part due to his ceaseless efforts to try to ascertain the facts of a situation before acting. He would, more than any other in his environment, try to straighten out the facts before he took up any kind of traditional nonviolent campaign. Not to separate factual truth from what your conscience or the voice within tells you, is to become a fanatic. Many of the followers of Gandhi tend towards fanaticism in this sense. They tend to believe that it is enough to listen to the voice within and that it is not necessary systematically to investigate the facts of a situation. But Gandhi was not like that. He would make a sharp distinction between what according to the facts and your inner voice you ought to do now and what eventually you might find to be the case. So I would insist that not to distinguish between the uses of the word truth in the writings of Gandhi is to make him a much lesser person than he was.

Gandhi displayed a rare combination of qualities. On the one hand was his humility towards factual truth, his awareness of human fallibility, his insistence that any time you might prove to be wrong about the factual situation. On the other side was his activism. This combination is extremely rare. So I shall not give up stressing that if we wish to be inspired by Gandhi in our political conduct, one of the ways is to be sure of the facts before we

fight. This implies maximum contact with your opponent. Your perception of what he stands for and what his intentions are should be factually correct. Your inner light does not provide the facts.

G. Ramachandran

Mr Thapar has insisted that we should reckon with the basic Hindu element in Gandhi. This is sometimes forgotten and I am grateful that he has brought it up for our consideration. But to stop there would be to do a great injustice to Gandhi. Although his roots were in Hinduism, the branches of his mind and soul spread out into every religious tradition of the world.

Gandhi was not merely a Hindu or an Indian and never remained a Hindu or an Indian in any exclusive sense. His religion is based upon universal truths and thus has an appeal for all of us, from every country, religion and tradition. Gandhi the Indian was also Gandhi the humanist. These two aspects—his Indianness and his humanism— have to be balanced, one with the other, if we are not to miss him altogether.

The first element in the humanism of Gandhi is the freedom of man. No man unfree was part of the great humanity of his dreams. Freedom and free men alone can make a just and human society. Justice follows inescapably from the freedom of

 Gandhi's conception; and when you have freedom

and justice you have peace. So the third element in the humanism of Gandhi is peace; and all these lead to the totality of human happiness. This is ultimately the picture of Gandhi's humanism.

Truth for Gandhi, as I have said earlier, was God; and God always was love and nothing but love for Gandhi. So when he said that truth is God, he inevitably and positively gave the idea that that truth is love. Then there is that axiom of Gandhi's thinking from which there is no escape for any of us if we wish to understand him, namely that love, when it acts, can act only nonviolently.

The question whether love *can* act violently and express itself in killing, destruction, ruthlessness and so on, needs to be objectively examined. Not that violence is always totally unjustified. As a practising gandhian, if I may say so, I would not challenge the validity of violence in many areas and conditions of life—for those who believe in it. But if truth is God (or love) then that love, the moment it begins to act, can act only in terms of nonviolence. In Gandhi's mind, truth incarnates as love, and love translates itself into action and incarnates as nonviolence. These are some of the postulates of Gandhi's thinking. This is the relentless chain of his logic. The humanism of freedom, justice, peace and happiness, he said, can come only when truth becomes love in action.

Ravan Farhadi

Truth in Gandhi's thinking, as in the thinking of all great philosophers of humanity, consists of a whole range of concepts whose purpose is to pin-point or isolate truth and not to define it. It is like synthesizing some kind of chemical in a laboratory. To try to do this would lead us into over-compartmentalizing our study.

Was Gandhi essentially a Hindu? Was his thinking like a tree, the branches of which have spread into other areas of human thinking? I believe that he was essentially a man who had a natural consciousness of what truth is and followed a path which was *his* humanism. It was later, when he regained or revisited his Hinduism, that he was able to pass judgement on it and on the tradition of his people, and to distinguish between what was in conformity with his humanism and what he had to reject categorically in the traditions of his people and the way those traditions were practised.

I would, therefore, suggest that we should concentrate on Gandhi's concept of nonviolence. Mr Ramachandran has shown us the way by saying that Gandhi's truth and the basis of his humanism is love. This love takes us to the idea of nonviolence, because truth, when it acts, according to Gandhi, can act only through love and nonviolence. It is in this way that I feel that any discussion of Gandhi could be prevented from becoming too

philosophical in character.

Olivier Lacombe

As an indologist, may I draw your attention to the following point. The Indian word satya is translated by the word truth. Now satya is directly linked to 'being' or 'reality'.

To Gandhi truth cannot only be an ideal value since it is directly dependent upon deeper reality. In the West certain philosophies disjoin value from reality. Not so in Indian thinking.

Gandhi is not a speculative philosopher. The concepts he uses, including those of truth and nonviolence, are not analytical concepts but synthetic ones; they tend to integrate a complete 'way of life'.

We are quite right in speaking of the humanism of Gandhi. But let us not forget that he never used this term himself. He spoke of a human fraternity, but he never spoke of humanism.

It was rightly pointed out that one of the basic features of Gandhi's thinking, though perhaps not the one he developed in his writings in the most ample way, was the problem of the relationship between the end and the means. Nonviolence being to truth what the means are to the end, the relationship of these two notions or orders of reality is of foremost importance.

It was also pointed out that for Gandhi it is

within moral experience that policies function—more like the link between truth and nonviolence.

It progressively emerged that nonviolence for him is something of a riddle, because neither the natural world nor social life gives us the immediate evidence of nonviolence. It is a conquest that has to be made over coarse reality.

Gandhi tells us in his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*—and this is particularly remarkable because nonviolence, although mentioned in the *Gita,* is not in the forefront of its teaching—that it is through experience that he reached his conclusion that between truth and nonviolence there is an end-to-the-means relationship. Now one must not lose sight of the fact that any kind of cleavage would be artificial in this respect and that for Gandhi nonviolence and truth were one whole. In the word that he coined, satyagraha, they are a true synthesis, and it is from this premise that we could look at truth and nonviolence. He felt the need to coin a new word, which did not exist in the Indian languages, precisely because to him these two aspects of his practical philosophy were intertwined.

Anibal del Campo

Professor Naess has rightly referred to the multiplicity of senses that Gandhi gives to the word truth. Thinkers and critics who have studied
 Gandhi's thought have generally found in that

diversity and multiplicity of senses a cause for confusion and misunderstanding. I am inclined to the view that this diversity is not a shortcoming but rather the fruit of the wealth of gandhian thought.

Gandhi had a multi-dimensional approach to truth. I believe that one of the factors which makes it possible for men to understand each other is the realization that there is no universal sense of truth, and that although there is a formal identity of concepts their application is multiple. Professor Hersch will remember that our master, Karl Jaspers, had on several occasions stressed what he called the pluri-dimensional sense of truth. If we reduce the sense of truth to something narrow, for example, as what is related to the physical world, and consider the spheres in which this connotation does not apply, then we dehumanize thought.

Here I come to what Professor Naess said when he referred to the ontological conception of truth. Sometimes we say that we have truth, that we possess truth. And from the scientific, mathematical and logical points of view we can indeed say that a truth is possessed by us. But when we come to morality, metaphysics and religion we cannot say that we possess truth but rather that truth possesses us; we are possessed by truth. We no longer say we have the truth; we say we are in the truth. That is why, in these areas, we have certain specific manifestations of truth. If one asks, 'What are your ideas?' we do not say we have this or that

idea, we say we are Protestant or Catholic, Buddhist or Hindu, Socialist or Marxist, etc. In fact, each one of these is the truth that we are imbued with, and this is what brings us closer.

We thus come to the notion given by Professor Lacombe as the first meaning of the word satya, with its ontological aspect. This hardly noticeable transfer of one connotation towards a deeper connotation brings out the difference between the western and eastern understanding of words. But in all human reality, whether in the east or west, north or south, there is no substantial difference but rather a very close identity when we refer to profound and really meaningful things.

If we analyse the Indian concept of truth and its intimate relationship with practice—what Masson-Oursel has called orthopraxy or right action—we notice that in the West there are certain factors which come very close to the Oriental and Indian conceptions of truth. I have in mind, in particular, what Descartes has written, in *Les passions de l'ame,* where he has said something which is very close to Jaspers' concept of internal action: that is to say, that there are not only external manifestations of inner decisions, but also what one may call an internal practice. Descartes has written that there are two types of action, an outward action which comes out from the soul and brings about a movement of the limbs and a modification of the outer world, and an inner

action which goes from the very centre of the soul and remains in the self. And he added: 'For example, when we decidc to believe in God'. In fact, this action modifies us and shapcs our personal reality.

Professor Lacombe has told us that it is necessary to consider the relation between nonviolence and truth as a link between ends and means. I do not think that the relationship between nonviolence and truth is really a relationship of means and ends. If we insisted on considering nonviolence as a means, we would be degrading nonviolence and reducing it to an instrumental role. Of course, nonviolence can be a means, but it is much more than that. It is love, and love is for Gandhi the supreme reality. That is why between reality, love and nonviolence one cannot make any discriminatory separation in the absolute sense. On the contrary, one must find an absolute ontological identity.

Secondly, Professor Lacombe has said that Gandhi never used the word humanism. That is curious—but natural, considering Gandhi's system of ideas. In contemporary philosophy there is a trend, a very marked trend, towards avoiding the use of the word humanism. In the Neo-Marxist school of thought, which is so particularly fashionable in France (for instance, in Althusser) they refer to a pre-Marxist and a Marxist period in the development of Marx's ideas. In the Marxist

 period, Althusser speaks, in a positive sense, of a

Marxian anti-humanism. Heidegger also, in his 'Letter on Humanism' addressed to Jean Beaufret, has maintained that one has to go beyond humanism in order to give back to man his real qualities and attributive functions. My good friend, R. Panikkar, the Spanish-Indian philosopher, has written that though the Christian religious concept is anti-humanist, it does not mean that the human condition is being degraded, but rather that it is being brought out and made to march. I have recalled all this merely to show that even if Gandhi did not use the term humanism, his thought is nevertheless the result of a very noble conception of man as such.

Thirdly, Professor Lacombe said that, according to Gandhi, nonviolence is not generally to be found in historical events. And yet I find that Gandhi advocated and defended the contrary. For him, the very framework of history is one of nonviolence; and if there had not been enough love and nonviolence in history, as he put it, the world would have been destroyed long ago. He has asked, how could one lean towards nonviolence if it were not an integral part of history? If nonviolence is so rare, how has it been possible to modify the situation so substantially, as Gandhi's nonviolence did? It can be shown that nonviolence has given results in history.

In answering a question put to him by a

 journalist, Gandhi had once said that nonviolence is

an integral part of the historical process but that history does not bring it out in its chronicles. If two brothers take to cudgels against each other, that is written down in the chronicles of history; if they take recourse to the police or a court of law, perhaps that too will be recorded in history. But if they decide to forget their quarrel, it will be forgotten by all and will not be registered as a fact of history. Gandhi has very rightly said that what gets recorded are merely the interruptions to the normal processes of history.

A great philosopher of my country, Carlos Vaz Ferreira, wrote in 1908, several years before these ideas of Gandhi were expressed, in a work called *Fermentario*, something amazingly similar. In an article on history, contained in that work, I read the following: 'What is relatively superior in history? What remain in history are never the most valuable things that one can find in humanity, but what is feasible, what can be linked to other visible facts and what can be easily recorded and described.' He further wrote, in the same sense, that neither opinion nor history remembers the best that there is in man and which obviously exists in all those who have made a contribution to human reform. It is important to remember that it is this goodness, although unrecorded in history, that has made it possible for us to avoid a lot of crimes and misdeeds.

Olivier Lacombe

Let me answer some of the questions raised in the discussion. With regard to humanism I had merely said that the word humanism does not come within Gandhi's terminology. And in saying so, I merely implied that we should not get involved in a difficult discussion on humanism as such. As for ends and means, perhaps I expressed myself with insufficient clarity. But Gandhi says somewhere that ahimsa is something of a means towards the end of truth. His idea of the means is very close to what Professor del Campo has said, namely, that they should not merely be tools or instruments but must be homogeneous with the ends.

Gandhi has said, in his autobiography and elsewhere, that the mixture of violence and nonviolence in everyday experience had made the notion of nonviolence enigmatical to him and that things became clearer only when he started from truth and went towards nonviolence. But, basically, I agree that if in the course of history there had been no kind of nonviolence at all, then obviously humanity would have been destroyed.

Fuad Bustany

Listening to the vivid portrait, which my scholarly colleagues have presented, of this great man who was, at one and the same time, an Asian and an

Indian and also a man of the world; a philosopher, a practical politician, a humanist and a humanitarian; and who was an advocate of satya, truth, which is not an abstract concept but contains, as Professor del Campo has said, a method, a way and a life-experience leading to an ideal life of sincerity, both towards oneself and towards others —how can one not recall the words of Christ, 'I am the way, the truth and the life', the three concepts which, fused into one, became the guiding light of Gandhi's life?

G. Ramachandran

I wish very humbly to offer a correction. More than one speaker appeared to be very clear in his mind that Gandhi never used the word humanism. The trouble about Gandhi is not that he spoke and wrote too little but that he spoke and wrote too much. The Government of India is now engaged in publishing all his available writings and spoken words and they are expected to run into some 80 big volumes.

I remember distinctly two occasions when Gandhi was challenged on the question of humanism. One of these came from Rabindranath Tagore, the most outstanding internationalist of our time in my country. He asked Gandhi at the height of the political movement: 'You are putting so much stress on nationalism, are you not really building a wall

around India?' Gandhi's answer came unequivocally. He said, 'If my nationalism is against a single human interest, I throw my nationalism into the Bay of Bengal'. Then he said, 'My nationalism is as broad as humanity'.[13] This is contained in a brilliant article in which he answered Tagore's criticism.

On another occasion Gandhi was speaking in Calcutta before the Rotarians. One of them asked him: 'You are putting so much stress on nationalism, but nationalism is an outmoded idea. Where is your internationalism and where is your humanism while you are all the time talking of the freedom of India?' And he said something which took the breath of his listeners away. He said, 'I want India to be free in order that it may die for humanity, if necessary. A subject nation can make no contribution to humanity.'[14]

It was not that he evolved any philosophy systematically about anything. His thoughts and ideas lie scattered over thousands of pages. Even about nonviolence I would say that he developed no systematic philosophy. We have to read his writings and, above all, look at his life if we wish to evolve a systematic philosophy of nonviolent action.

Humanism was inherent in every spoken word and thought of Gandhi. He again and again said, 'My goal is not the freedom of India. My goal is a liberated humanity. My goal is a just human order.
 My goal is the happiness of the whole of mankind,

for which I shall be willing to throw India into the sacrificial fire the moment it becomes necessary.'[15] This is the broadest and the deepest humanism which Gandhi represented.

M. Drobyshev

I should like to emphasize one aspect of the idea that has already been expressed here by Dr Krasa and Dr El-Khachab. To understand the logic of Gandhi's thought, to understand his outlook, it is not enough to follow the intrinsic logic of his reasoning; to understand him, one must study him in the context of what he has done. Here I think we come to the question that has been posed in the third paragraph of our Working Document, that is, whether Gandhi should be thought of as a man of action or as a contemplative; as a theorist or as a politician. I think Gandhi was both a theorist and a man of action, a politician.

I shall give you only one example. One of his great traits as a man of action seems to me to lie in the fact that he was one of the first leaders of India who understood the decisive role of the people in the anti-imperialist struggle. That distinguishes Gandhi from those other leaders of the liberation movement who hoped to resolve the contradiction between the colony and the metropolis through talks at the top, without the participation of the masses. Gandhi knew the life and customs of the

common people of India. That is why he was able to formulate patriotic slogans for the liberation movement which were readily understood by them.

One may say that, in trying to awaken the masses, organize them and drive them into the fight against imperialism, Gandhi was only expressing the objective tendency of the time, the objective need for the unity of all patriotic forces. But does it not take a great deal of theoretical shrewdness to be able to see what the objective need is at any given period of time? I think we have therefore every reason to look upon Gandhi as a theorist as well as as a man of action.

Arne Naess

There are at least two ways of deriving the principle of nonviolence from the metaphysical views of Gandhi.

Take the concept of fallibilism, the notion that you can be, and probably mostly are, mistaken as regards the facts of a political situation. If you take that very seriously, you cannot act, since you run the risk of acting from wrong data. If at the same time you have moral compunctions and find it your duty not to harm your opponent, then again you cannot act, because it is possible that he is right and you are wrong. Moreover there is the fallibilism of the inner voice; for even if truth is what the inner

 voice tells us, you cannot know for certain which

voice coming from within is the right one. Gandhi insisted on the necessity of cultivating the inner voice and gradually making it purer. Nonviolence follows from these two fallibilisms. It follows that, in every circumstance of your life, it is your duty to abstain from violence, because the one that you injure may be right and you may be wrong. This is one way of deriving nonviolence from the search for truth—both moral and factual truth.

The other way is through the ontological concept of truth, or 'what really is'. We are all ultimately one. Therefore if I injure you, I am injuring myself. In more modern terminology, if I injure you, I limit my own capacity for self-realization, and not only your capacity and your occasion for self-realization.

The term nonviolence, if taken in its broadest sense, cannot, as Gandhi stressed, be differentiated from the concepts of truth. But sometimes he used nonviolence in a narrower sense and then you have an instrumental relation. Truth always comes first and nonviolence is the supreme means.

My conclusion would be that, apart from other ways of deriving the principle of nonviolence from metaphysics, there is at least one which deserves more attention, especially from political sects—namely, the fallibilistic concept of truth which makes nonviolence an insurance against the risk that you may injure or kill those who have right on their side.

Radivoj Uvalic

I believe we can all agree with the main idea of Gandhi, namely, the complexity of the notion of truth and the difficulty of discovering truth completely. It is natural that we have not all understood Gandhi in the same way. Each of us has a limited knowledge, a professional interpretation of Gandhi's ideas. A confrontation in ideas concerning Gandhi is thus useful and necessary, in that it could shed new light upon this great thinker, humanist and man of action who endeavoured to change both man and society.

I am an economist and what is of interest to me are the social changes that are brought about through changes in man. It seems to me that the chief aim of Gandhi centred upon society and its injustices. He wanted to see how these could be repaired or set right.

Here I may refer, for instance, to the changes which occurred during the course of Gandhi's life. When he went to study in England his ambitions were different. He wanted to be a lawyer, to learn his profession and to serve it. It was only when he went to South Africa and was struck by the social injustice of racialism and the conditions in which the Indian community there lived, that the great changes of his life occurred. He wanted to set this injustice right and to serve his compatriots. And that is how he began the political struggle to which

he sacrificed all his other ambitions, his profession and his family life in order to devote himself entirely and exclusively to bringing about this change in society. In my view, this was Gandhi's basic goal, struck as he was by the injustice of racial segregation in South Africa.

My understanding of truth, as I see it in Gandhi's work, is that for him truth is both in us and outside of us. Truth is everything that is around us as well as what is within us, the truth which we do not know about or which we know only in part or in a transfigured way. Gandhi's chief message to man was to concentrate all his efforts on the discovery of this truth. He believed that through such discovery man would be able to change himself, and by changing himself he would change society and remove the negative consequences of modern civilization resulting from the misuse of violence and force throughout history.

From this point of view, there is a kinship between the philosophy of Gandhi and Marxist philosophy. For Marxists also, truth is something that we do not fully know but towards which we are continually moving. As Lenin put it, truth is infinite; we are getting closer and closer to it but we shall never know the full truth. It seems to me that this idea of Lenin's is quite close to Gandhi's idea. According to Gandhi one has to struggle hard to discover the truth. As it is, we follow a slow and difficult process and it is only through a better

knowledge of truth that we can transform man and society, and through truth alone can we achieve progress. Of course, for Gandhi—and this is where his ideas are different from Marxism—this transformation can be brought about by the personal effort of the human individual. Although he spoke of the transformation of society, his goal was to address himself to man, to educate individual men in the spirit of nonviolence.

Gandhi's nonviolence was not a fatalism, in that one had merely to forgo violence and things would happen as they should happen. No, he wanted to see a change brought about, and that is why his concept of nonviolence has to do with the notion of freeing man from fear and hatred, and of transforming the attitudes of man towards society and towards other members of society. Through this transformation of man, of the individual, he hoped that man would free himself from the negative aspects which had appeared throughout history. By freeing himself man would be in a better position to understand the reality, have a better grasp of truth and thereby change the environment in which he lived, so as to lead to the social revolution which was the main goal of his action.

It is also in the same way that I understand Gandhi's religiousness. Being an economist, I must confess I am not very familiar with the Buddhist and Hindu religions. But what strikes me on reading Gandhi is that his religious credo is linked

with his social aims. It is through religion that he wishes to transform society. Since he addresses himself to millions of oppressed human beings, most of whom have no education whatsoever but who nevertheless form the main arm of his nonviolent struggle for the changing of man in society, he understands the importance of religion and realizes that the language of religion is the language which would be better understood by them. But in his own religiousness, he tries to adapt his religion to his earthly ends, his social aims. That is why his concept of religion is neither hundred per cent Hindu nor hundred per cent Buddhist. He has always said that he is a reformer of Hinduism. He has also stressed that he was influenced not only by Buddhism and Hinduism, but also by Christianity and Islam. In other words, he is claiming to be a religious reformer. And if he is striving to reform religion it is not only because he wishes to understand the truth better, but also because he wishes to present this truth in a way in which it would be understood by the masses. He is addressing the millions of destitute, exploited people in Indian society and it is, therefore, not without reason that he was a victim of his radicalism in this struggle for truth. He did not hesitate to change the precepts and dogmas of religion, wherever they failed, in his opinion, to serve the final goal that he chose for himself—the struggle against social injustice.

Gandhi's truth is truth linked to the struggle which he waged and for which he sacrificed his entire life. For him truth is that which provides the means of struggle to fight and reduce to the minimum the injustices which characterize our society.

This is how I understand his notion of nonviolence also. Nonviolence is not fatalism; it is not merely to allow oneself to be subjected to the condition in which one finds oneself. He was for change through effort; and it is through relentless efforts that we must try, both individually and collectively, to change the point of view of those who are responsible for the injustices and disfigurement of society which result from the use of violence.

Jeanne Hersch

Mr Thapar said that in Hinduism one does not appropriate an absolute truth or something that is absolutely just, as opposed to something that is absolutely false, but that one stays in a kind of greyish area. On the other hand, if we look at Gandhi's life we have the impression of a person who was constantly faced with an absolute choice; in other words, he chooses *this* and it can be nothing else. I wonder whether the refusal to *possess* the absolute does not stem from the fact that one knows it is never given, so that it is the sense of the absolute itself that in some way leads to the denial of possessing part of it; in other words, whether

this greyish area is not precisely the result of a habit always to confront particular events, particular choices and concrete situations with an absolute which is never encountered in its purity. Could we not perhaps say that the more people speak of the absolute, as if they possessed it, the less will choices appear as absolute choices? And is not Gandhi the absolute contrary of this?

This leads me to a point I wish to raise. It appears from human history that whenever reference was made to the absolute it usually led to violence. It would thus seem that if you wish to exclude violence, it is necessary to take to the path of compromise or to follow an anti-absolute path. Yet Gandhi was one who based his nonviolence on the absolute, because truth for him was an absolute need or requirement. Isn't there a conundrum here? If we confront this with modern concepts and ideas, it often appears that you have to give up all kinds of reference to the absolute if you want to eliminate violence. But what happens? When you eliminate the absolute, you not only eliminate violence but you also eliminate meaning. And thus condemned to a world which has lost all meaning for want of the absolute, we lose the meaning of nonviolence as well.

Romesh Thapar

I find that I have been misunderstood. I did not
 imply that Gandhi was a Hindu or that he had only

one concept, the Hindu concept. What I did try to suggest was that we are tending to lose track of the essential roots of Gandhi's thought. These essential roots were Hindu. When I raised the question of being true to oneself, I believe I put forward an extremely enlightening concept, a concept which could be universal.

Hinduism in its pure form is a kind of all-embracing philosophy. You can find a hundred philosophies in Hinduism, depending on what you seek. It is as amorphous as the cultural communities of India. But this greyish area I spoke about is not one that creates a situation where you compromise; rather, it is one in which you seek a positive consensus for change, without arrogating to yourself the thought that only you know the truth.

An activist who believes in nonviolence must confront himself before he goes into battle, because it is not just a question of being nonviolent. Indian nonviolence would be construed by many philosophers of the West as a violent act. To invite upon yourself the violence of the oppressor is a violent act. But if you look at it in terms of the concept that Gandhi developed, you are not inviting violence but you are exerting a moral force upon your oppressor.

When Professor Naess raised the point about various aspects and levels of truth, I thought that we have to look rather for the basic contact between truth and nonviolence. Factual or scientific truth is

one thing, but there are so many other matters which one has to face within oneself. The business of going into battle involves commitments to many things. When we go into battle we should know what our strengths and weaknesses are, each one's estimate of strength and weakness being of course different. It is an extremely complex matter and I would suggest that we do not try to apply a fixed concept.

As Professor Lacombe has said, we should only accept Gandhi's approach to truth as satya. This is really a question of grappling with oneself and understanding it. Without the fusion of the inner and the outer, I am afraid, Gandhi did not see the power of collective action. The supreme individualism of his teaching merges into the collective of social action and that is where you find the link between truth and nonviolence.

Ravan Farhadi

I have a feeling that while there is basic agreement among us concerning the personality and thinking of the later Gandhi, of what this was in 1948, his thinking at the beginning of the century, his inner self, is something about which we are not in complete agreement. Can we say now that this had its roots in Hinduism? I have serious doubts about it. As a young intellectual, Gandhi had a spiritual crisis, and it is out of this that he gradually

formulated his ideology. The components of this ideology were not only, or exclusively, Hindu. If you read his first writings, you will see that there was a spiritual crisis in him which stemmed from the influence exercised upon him by others, by different disciplines and schools of thought, other religions, like Christianity and Islam, and other philosophers and philosophies of his time. But it is certain that Gandhi was, as a man, deeply an Indian. He felt it. It is also as certain that Gandhi took a firm decision to serve India and the Indians. And he was conscious of being essentially an Indian who followed the Hindu religion. It was at this point that Gandhi studied his Hinduism again, at a point when he had already embarked upon an ideology which was basically humanist and which had its roots not only in Hinduism. He found in Hinduism concepts and truths that were dear to his heart. At the same time he found in the traditions of his country—and these are closely intertwined with the Hindu religion— concepts and practices which were contrary to his conscience and which he felt bound to attack. This young intellectual that was Gandhi must, I feel, be given due recognition in any objective estimate of the man.

Marie-Pierre Herzog

What strikes me in Gandhi is that he was a man
 who lent himself to mutation and change. If we

refer to his autobiography, we see that he went through a number of very obvious shifts and changes: as when he returned to India from England, before leaving for South Africa; and then, after a long period of twenty-one years, when he returned to India from South Africa; and again in 1934, after a very politicized period, when he went back to the village. While all these successive adjustments in his life are not completely obvious, it is clear that he tried out a multitude of things. This awareness will enable us to grasp in a more unified way all the different aspects of the man. We might even say perhaps that great men are more subject to change than others.

Living as we do in a time of change, we cannot take Gandhi out of the prodigious context in which he acted and lived. This context is the movement of history, which is a second type of mutation. To this type of mutation he responded with personal mutations and adjustments. When someone who is not a specialist tries to understand Gandhi, he gets an impression that everything in his life changes—the internal life as much as the external political action, the withdrawals as much as the forward thrusts, the refusal to change as much as the innovations. By these shifts and changes he tried to respond to a world in constant motion.

Olivier Lacombe

I would like to draw your attention to paragraph 9 of the Working Document, which says that nonviolence shóuld go beyond violence rather than be its contrary. If violence is simply the contrary of nonviolence then you have an endless dialectical process and no real end to nonviolence.

G. Ramachandran

Mr Thapar said that Gandhi's roots were in the religion and culture of India. I countered by saying that Gandhi did not stop there but grew out of these roots into a mighty tree with branches spreading into every religion and culture. Mr Farhadi, on the other hand, thinks that this is not a fair enough characterization of Gandhi, that early in life he broke through the religion and traditions of his country and grew into a profound humanist. I would suggest, by way of a resolution of the seeming contradiction, that Gandhi, like anyone else, was a product of his time.

Having lived and worked with Gandhi very closely and having studied him for last thirty years, let me make it clear that Gandhi's roots were deep in the culture and tradition of India, and that it is this culture and tradition that enabled him to open out his mind to every influence from every part of the world. He grew with the years.

Mrs Herzog said that Gandhi was typical of all great men, to whom conforming to what they said yesterday was not the last word of truth, so much as re-adapting themselves to the new conditions of life. In this Gandhi was a wonderful example. I could give you innumerable instances of how he changed from time to time in order that the truth in him might conform not to the truth of yesterday but to the truths of today and tomorrow. Truth is a growing thing. It is wrong to think that truth is static, that the lineaments of truth have been laid down for ever by somebody or in some place. In my opinion, God himself grows with man. If you look at the history of the idea of God, you will find that God himself grows with man and history. Gandhi also grew with man and history.

Gandhi was not a kind of namby-pamby man. He was not a sentimentalist, talking only soft language and trying to please everybody—a very good fellow, as one might say. Those of us who knew him and lived with him, and saw him at work, realized from day to day that he was a very formidable person, that there was steel in him, that his nonviolence was not something which said yes, yes to everybody, to please everybody, hoping that everybody would join him one day. His nonviolence was strong as steel, flexible but unbreakable. He always insisted on this quality of strength in nonviolence. Let me give you one little example.

 This was during the second nonviolent revolution

in India, when all the leaders and some 80,000 other people were in prison throughout the country. Gandhi's last words, as he was whisked away, was that each man in his place must determine the part he would play in the revolution and act as though he were the leader of his area.

In Bardoli, a sub-district of Gujarat, with a population of 80,000 peasants, all authentic leadership was in prison. But the revolutionary movement went on and sent out its directive that the symbolic Independence Day should be celebrated in Bardoli, as throughout India. Who was to celebrate Independence Day in Bardoli? Every leader and worker was in prison. But there was a woman whom Gandhi had trained and her name was Ganga Behn. She went round in her area, saying, 'We have to celebrate Independence Day. How many women will join me?' 380 women agreed to join her. At an appointed time they were to meet together on an open field and take the pledge of independence. Immediately it was known that this would happen, the police entered the area and went about tom-tomming that meetings were prohibited and if anybody held one it would be broken up by force. Nothing daunted, precisely at the appointed hour 380 women marched towards the meeting place, singing the Ramdhun prayer. Two lorries arrived full of armed policemen, armed with what in India is known as the lathi. The police jumped out, lined up and told the advancing women, 'You cannot

hold a meeting. This is prohibited under the law.' Ganga Behn, who was at the head of the column, looked straight at the inspector of police and said: 'Whose order is it? Is it an order signed by Mahatma Gandhi?' The police inspector grew red in the face, but he kept his temper and waited. At 3 o'clock Ganga Behn took possession of the open field and asked the marching women to sit down. Then she stood up and said, 'I will read out the pledge, but you must remain seated'. As she started reading, the police officer intervened and said, 'Stop now, or I will break up the meeting by force'. But she continued reading and there was at once a brutal lathi charge on the gathering. Not one of the women stood up, not one retreated and not one cried out, although more than half of them had their sarees drenched in blood. But they would not budge: the police had to drag them into the waiting lorries and take them away to prison.

What I have recounted is just to give you a little glimmer of the fact that Gandhi's nonviolence was not something namby-pamby. The men, women and children who participated in his nonviolent struggle did so with their lives in their hands. This quality of gandhian nonviolence, the steel in it, flexible but unbreakable, is something we must not forget when we are dealing with Gandhi.

Jean d'Ormesson

In my great ignorance of Gandhi, I have turned to other cultures to look for the equivalent of what is accounted for as going beyond or overtaking violence. There was a moment in western civilization where we find exactly the same phenomenon of, first, using violence and then transcending it. That is what can be described as the attitude of the noble hero at the end of the feudal age. To give a parallel, in Corneille you find two of the ideas which are expounded extremely clearly in our Working Document: that is to say, that forgiveness is the hero's crown and that one who returns good for evil conquers the world. You will find similar moral tenets not only in Corneille but in a book such as Paul Benichou's *Les morales du grand siecle*. Yet there are considerable differences, I agree. What you have in Corneille is only an individual form of honour which tends to strengthen, on the most optimistic assumption, the moral force of the one who exercises it. On the less optimistic assumption, which is generally enshrined in the concept of the political adviser, it is just a device—a device of skill to attain a greater degree of material power. Of course, under both assumptions, I am not necessarily talking about material power.

When you come to individual sainthood, both are obviously to be rejected in the case of Gandhi. To echo Professor Hersch, it is not enough to be

intelligent, nor is it enough to be individually noble. In western history, at the end of the feudal age, one had this distinct feeling that it is not enough to be individually noble. Hence the process which was described as the taking to pieces or the tearing asunder of the hero at the end of the 17th century—something that La Rochefoucauld and Pascal have marvellously achieved, having, so to speak, taken something from the notion of individual human dignity to force people to go beyond strictly individual nobility. I think that in Gandhi there is not this notion of the destruction of the individual noble hero.

If this is not the case, then what has occurred? There are two possibilities, as I see it. Nonviolence, satyagraha or ahimsa is a form of struggle, a way of waging a struggle; and it is in that light that one should try and see how it can be both the supreme weapon in struggle and/or the supreme dignity. Now, how is this possible? Is it by any chance through a kind of extension or expansion of individual saintliness to encompass and embrace an ever-growing community? In that case, of course, we would be veering more closely to a notion of Christianity, the idea that he who gives good for evil conquers the world. But this implies that the other party is expected to act in conformity with the principle.

It has been said that ahimsa or nonviolence might have existed as a function of the notion whereby the

adversary is being righted, and not altogether precluded. Yes, certainly. But even if he is wrong, even then ahimsa, nonviolence, should be used.
If we go beyond this, I think we arrive at the notion of a kind of universal truth which looms larger than the individual—a state of universal sainthood. Well, this seems rather far from Professor Uvalic's notion of a kind of 'personalized Marxism'. I wonder if it is not in fact the exact opposite. In other words, instead of its being a kind of 'personalized Marxism' would it not rather be a kind of 'universalized sainthood' which would, so to speak, further saintliness in men through the medium of ahimsa or nonviolence considered as a weapon stronger than violence?

Miloslav Krasa

It would be interesting to identify instances of ideas similar to those of Gandhi in western history. In the nineties of the last century we had one such instance in the Czech liberation movement organized by a group of young men led by a student of law, Gustav Zalud. He put forward ideas, publicized even through the press, which are strikingly similar to satyagraha, not passive resistance but active fight through nonviolent means. I think the study of such comparative history should be encouraged, as it would show the development of the idea of satyagraha. One cannot draw from this the

conclusion that there was at that time some direct or indirect influence of Gandhi in Central Europe. On the contrary, Gandhi's activities in South Africa were almost unknown in continental Europe and especially in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. A more reasonable inference would be that under similar conditions—the people of Czechoslovakia at that time were oppressed by the overwhelming power of the Austro-Hungarian empire which they had no other means of fighting—similar ideas develop. There was, of course, one great difference. In Zalud the idea was purely academic, whereas it was Gandhi who first put it into practical political activity and proved its validity as a means of struggle.

Paul Power

It seems to me that we have arrived at perhaps two basic questions. One is, exactly what is the relationship between truth and nonviolence? Here it seems to me that we must recognize that Gandhi was not a systematic thinker; his concepts are not, as our Chairman suggested, analytical, they are synthetic, so that what I come down to is the question about the binding power or the binding validity of nonviolence. On whom is it binding? One answer is that it is valid, it is binding, it is obligatory on those who believe in it, who accept it. But, otherwise, it is up to every individual to go by

his conviction, by his conscience and so on. A different interpretation would be that Gandhi's teaching about the truth of nonviolence is an obligatory value binding on everyone, regardless of what their actual practice is. I think that in our discussions we do have a problem here as to which of these two interpretations is the correct one. It does seem that Gandhi said from time to time that ahimsa was his guide, that it was binding on him, and that there were no exceptions to this in his behaviour. By this he seems to imply that others could do as they wished, that they could follow their dharma. Personally I think Gandhi believed that nonviolence is binding on everyone and he was perhaps shocked and disappointed when others did not practise the conviction that he had adopted. If this is an unsatisfactory answer, we are left with the question: to what extent is nonviolence binding on everyone universally, or is it simply a matter of personal conviction?

My second basic question is concerned with the concrete manifestations of truth. Of course, we have the matter of courage, of selflessness, and in addition to nonviolence, we have the matter of justice that our Working Document refers to when it says: 'Perhaps then truth is the theoretical aspect of justice and justice is the practical and moral aspect of truth'. The question that we might wrestle with is: what exactly are the requirements or
 dictates of justice, if it is a natural extension of

Gandhi's belief in nonviolence and, ultimately, in truth?

Arne Naess

Constantly the question is being asked: is Gandhi against all kinds of violence or only some? I think one could answer by saying that violence for Gandhi is always an evil, because it is always an imperfection and, in that sense, always wrong. But a quite different question would be whether *a person* in a given situation can be said always to act wrongly when he uses violence. And here we should answer, No. Sometimes a person, for instance in a situation of extreme helplessness, could be doing the right thing in using violence, in spite of its being an evil. As a predicate of the personal act, to use violence can be not only legitimate but even a duty. This may be one way of making a distinction between violence as a phenomenon and the ethical judgement of a person's act. Instead of saying, as we often do, 'Well, Gandhi is to some extent for violence, because it is better to be violent than to run away, when (for instance) it is your duty to protect women and children', we can say categorically that violence is wrong and is always an evil. But without examining the characteristics of the situation and his own power, we cannot object to a person who uses violence in a concrete situation. I would suggest that it is a personal matter, in the

sense that, if your conscience tells you that it is better to make use of violence than to run away, it is up to your conscience to take the decision. You would be doing something wrong only if you went against your own individual conscience. Such a view implies, however, the constant effort to purify the inner voice.

Radivoj Uvalic

It has apparently been understood that I presented Gandhi as an 'individualist Marxist'. This was not at all what I tried to say. But I did find a certain similarity between what Lenin has written and Gandhi's own notion of truth and satyagraha. Gandhi's notion of truth is of something that has to be pursued for a long period of time, in the present and for generations to come. I thought that this notion was not far from what Lenin wrote about truth: namely, that it is something to which we are getting nearer and nearer every day but which we will never fully encompass. Truth is infinite. Men come nearer and nearer to it but they will never achieve their final purpose and objective, nor exhaust the knowledge of absolute truth. It is only in this particular context that I find a certain similarity between Lenin's and Gandhi's thought, or the Marxist conception in general.

This idea of a permanent quest for truth also sheds
 a certain light on the conception of ahimsa,

nonviolence. I do not think Gandhi believed that violence would disappear overnight from our society. It is ever present in the relations between men and its disappearance would be a lengthy process. What he hoped for was the reduction of violence to a degree less than what exists today. This is the practical aspect of nonviolence. In the course of reducing the degree of violence in a given society, every success helps in the transformation of men and human relations and thus marks a step towards progress.

I am not saying that there is no difference between Marxism and Gandhism, but that there are certain points in common between them. Gandhi was opposed to all forms of exploitation of man by man and to that extent was a socialist and a revolutionary. But he did not accept the notion of the struggle between the classes, in the Marxist sense of the word. He did not think that the objective would be attained through the Marxist struggle between the classes but rather by man's cutting himself free from the modern industrial civilization which has, according to his thinking, introduced the notions of violence and conflict.

Prem Purachatra

It is necessary to remember that Gandhi was conditioned by the circumstances of his time. We cannot label him as a Hindu or a Buddhist or

anything. He was just Gandhi, because he derived his inspiration from many sources. I was alarmed when some of my colleagues identified his views with Buddhism. I do not think they coincide a great deal with Buddhism, except probably on the question of ahimsa. Gandhi's satyagraha went far beyond Buddhism. It is not enough to be nonviolent in the sense of being passive. In fact, one sometimes has to be very aggressive in order to attain one's ends through nonviolence. Therefore, I think Gandhi was not at all passive; he was very active. And as a political activist, he went much farther than he would have gone if he had been purely associated as a Buddhist, for instance. Gandhi's nonviolence is not the nonviolence known to Buddhists, nor is it the same as the nonviolence, as I understand it, of the Christians.

Walpola Rahula Thero

Let me make myself clear. For me there is nothing called Buddhist nonviolence or Hindu nonviolence or Christian nonviolence. If it is nonviolence, it is nonviolence; if it is love, it is love. Nonviolence and love are universal. Certainly, as Prince Purachatra said, Gandhi was never officially or professionally a Buddhist. In fact, Buddhism does not demand of anybody that he proclaim himself a Buddhist.

Prince Purachatra also gave the impression that Buddhism is a passive attitude, and that Gandhi's

nonviolence is active and revolutionary. As a matter of fact, the first historical example of non-cooperation is to be found in Buddhist literature. One of the Buddha's disciples, Channa, his former charioteer, became a monk under him. But as he was closely associated with him, Channa would not follow his teachings nor obey his orders. The Buddha tried to change him but he was not successful. Shortly before his death, the Buddha told Ananda: 'When I am dead and gone, apply the brahmadanda to Channa.' The word is brahmadanda, as given in the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*. Ananda asked him: 'Sir, what is the brahmadanda?' The Buddha said: 'It is non-cooperation. Don't talk to Channa; don't advise him; don't associate with him; if he talks to you, don't answer him; completely boycott him and avoid him.' After the Buddha's death Ananda announced this to the Sangha. But Ananda was afraid to go alone to Channa, who was a violent man. So the Sangha asked Ananda to go with a deputation to see Channa and tell him this. Ananda went and told Channa, 'On the wishes of the Buddha and the orders of the Sangha, I want to convey this order to you'; and then he pronounced the order. It is said that Channa fainted on hearing this, because he would be boycotted for all his life. Later on, he admitted his fault, promised to follow the teachings and corrected himself and he became a good man. As far as I know, this is the first

historical example of the boycott.

Jean d'Ormesson

Can it really be said that Gandhi tried to reduce the level of violence in the world? Is that not a political position? I think he wished to ban it altogether, not to reduce it. So far as the choice between violence and cowardice is concerned, surely there is an easy way out. It is spelt out in Gandhi's texts very clearly. The way out is death. What you have to do is to die. Death is an active, positive thing. I do not want to draw any excessive comparison with the content of death in Hegel or with his dialectics of the masochist slave. The slave in Hegelian terms is one who, having despised death, uses violence. But in Gandhi there is this notion of nonviolence which, so to speak, travels through the necessary content of death.

Arne Naess

On the question of non-cooperation, certain kinds of Buddhism would be extremely close to the teachings of Gandhi, but not the kind of non-cooperation that Venerable Rahula Thero gave as an example. Non-cooperation means, as far as I can see, non-cooperation in evil. But it does not mean limitation of contact. On the contrary. If there is
 somebody you wish to influence, get hold of him, be

even like Socrates, as a pest to him, try gently but consistently to get into personal contact with him. This alone gives good results. If you are going to boycott somebody, try to win him over as a friend, because what you are boycotting is not him but the institution or system behind him. Hence the slogan, 'Don't fight antagonists; fight antagonisms', needs a positive form: 'Befriend antagonists; fight antagonisms'. I think the example that was given is a kind of contrary example of gandhian strategy. We can certainly get better examples of the close relationship between certain Buddhist trends and Gandhi.

N. G. Ranga

It was rightly said that Gandhi's conception of nonviolence is not static but dynamic. Some wondered whether Gandhi was an individualist. He was, to my mind, both an individualist and a mass leader. He not only practised nonviolence himself but he also trained a number of people to be nonviolent. He even organized masses of people to practise nonviolence through satyagraha, even without being completely nonviolent in themselves.

Gandhi's non-cooperation was a dynamic conception. He wanted Indians to non-cooperate with the Legislative Assemblies and boycott the elections in 1920. But in 1934 he allowed the Congress organization to go into the Councils and

by 1946 the Congress had begun to assume power through the legislatures. Non-cooperation did not mean the same thing to Gandhi under all kinds of circumstances.

It has been asked, how much did Gandhi draw upon Buddhism? It is like asking, what is Hinduism today apart from Buddhism? So much of Hindu belief is based upon the precepts and practices not only of the Buddha but of so many of his followers. Hinduism has absorbed Buddhism.

Was Gandhi rooted in Hinduism? Take for instance fasting. He says in his autobiography that he learnt it from his mother. But is fasting the special monopoly of Hindus? Do not Muslims and Christians fast? Fasting is a universal instrument which has been practised by people of all religions whenever they felt the need to purify themselves or to help their friends and relatives purify and improve themselves.

Then there is the question of ahimsa. What is it that distinguishes Gandhi's ideas from those of so many other great men like him? It was said that Gandhi's ideas were conditioned by the environment and circumstances in which they were developed. To some extent this is true, but they have gone far beyond their moorings. Buddhists in Vietnam have committed self-immolation. A Christian young man, who later became a communist, committed self-immolation the other day in Czechoslovakia. Such things are happening all over the world.

Therefore, ahimsa cannot be considered to be conditioned by Indian circumstances or rooted in India or confined to any one particular religion.

Gandhi has demonstrated through the various experiments and revolutionary movements he had led in India that ahimsa can be practised by individuals, groups, organizations and the people as a whole, provided that they are prepared to absorb the ahimsaic atmosphere. He made a distinction between those who accept ahimsa as a matter of principle and those who accept it as a matter of policy. He insisted that individual satyagrahis should accept it as a matter of principle, but when it came to great mass movements, he allowed people to practise it even as a matter of expediency. Therefore, Gandhi's ahimsa is both a dynamic conception and an instrument, a weapon which can be used by people at different stages of self-development and self-purification. From my experience as an organizer of mass and individual satyagraha, both under Gandhi's leadership and afterwards, I can say how very effective nonviolence can be, though not as a kind of inverse of violence. Nonviolence is a thing by itself and need not be the inverse of violence.

It has been said that Gandhi wanted violence to be abjured completely. If it had not been for the British, who were so humanistic and Christian, would nonviolence have been so effective? What has been the fate of nonviolence as it is being practised

in Czechoslovakia? Had it not been for the Americans and their Christian spirit, would the Buddhist monks who immolated themselves in Vietnam have achieved what they did achieve, so quickly and to the same extent? These are questions which remain to be answered.

Ravan Farhadi

It was said that Gandhi would in no case have envisaged the possibility of violence. I am afraid this is a mere idealization of Gandhi. Gandhi was still alive when an armed conflict broke out in Kashmir and the Indian army had to intervene. At that time Gandhi did not disapprove of this armed intervention. In the fall of 1962 other events occurred and there was a feeling in India that the country might be invaded. Gandhi was no longer alive then. His closest disciple, Vinoba, was asked, 'If our country is attacked by a foreign country using violence, will it be wise to react nonviolently?' He said: 'This would be insane'. We might, from a philosophical viewpoint, continue to discuss the limitations of nonviolence. But the limits of violence is also a subject to be studied.

Jeanne Hersch

I should like to revert to the point raised by Mr d'Ormesson concerning the idea of universal

sanctity. I believe there is something quite accurate in this, except the universalization itself, which does not fit in with Gandhi's idea. I think Gandhi did not commend himself to universalizing operations such as this. What is exact in Gandhi's nonviolence—and those who know Gandhi better than me should correct me if I am wrong—is that it is practised against an adversary and has within it the hope of disarming him. Otherwise it is meaningless. It has within it the hope of bringing the adversary into the field of nonviolence or of taking him away from the horrors of violence. There is in nonviolence an element of dialogue, of language; it is something which *speaks,* which *says something* to the other. Whereas violence does not speak, it says nothing to the other.

It seems to me that in nonviolence there are three necessary elements. First of all, the practice of nonviolence is a language addressed to someone. Secondly, it is a kind of prayer which strengthens, on a level other than violence, the cause defended, by bringing to bear on it a force of another order. Thirdly, it implies the possibility of death and a consent to it. If you analyse these three elements, you will find that they are not distinct but simultaneous. Violence is nothing of the sort. It can neither be a language nor a prayer, nor can it be an agreement to die. It is rather a confrontation with death.

 On page 3 of the Working Document it says that

there are times when violence can be recommended. But when Gandhi says, 'I would advise violence', it is simply a way of speaking. It means that violence may increasingly tend towards nonviolence, whereas fear or cowardice will not. You require more courage to be violent than in simply being a coward. It is a way of speaking, didactic. It is a way of avoiding any misunderstanding about nonviolence, which could be mistaken for cowardice. It is not really a piece of advice to use violence. At any rate, it does not seem to be so to me, either from the context or the style of Gandhi.

Lastly, Gandhi has said that there is no such principle that could be applied automatically in every case. He said that he never found such a principle! Therefore, even the rule of nonviolence implies presence and new choice, in every new situation of life and history.

Rene Habachi

I believe we are agreed that the concept of dynamic truth in Gandhi is oriented towards action and that it is characterized from its source by a coefficient of justice. Now how is this truth simultaneously compassion? We shall understand this if we remember that we live in a world of violence—or so Gandhi thinks—in which truth is, as it were, covered by the reciprocal violence of man with nature, man in nature and man towards man. This

hidden truth should be uncovered or rediscovered or—where it does not exist or is jeopardized by the violence of human beings—created. Since truth is a search for this other truth hidden in the universe, its movement is from itself to itself; in other words, it is a kind of love. It is not only a theoretical truth but an active truth which, seeking itself in the universe, tries to reach accomplishment. This is how we get a movement of compassion and love for everything that is truth, but which is covered and disfigured by violence.

This is where the idea of nonviolence emerges. How does this hidden truth, which could be called an absolute, manifest itself in the human being? According to Gandhi, it is through the small voice of conscience, the small voice which is the ambassador, in each one of us, of this truth which has been hidden or remains to be discovered. Since it has been disfigured by violence, it is through nonviolence that it can be detected.

This kind of nonviolence is, of course, not passivity. Gandhi said this in sufficiently strong terms for it never to be challenged: 'I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence.... I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour.'[16] Therefore, nonviolence is not passivity.

 It is violence going in another direction, as it were,

but a contrary direction.

Violence, on the other hand, is simply a dialogue between one kind of violence and another kind of violence. It only buries the truth deeper and deeper without enabling it to be resuscitated. This is where nonviolence becomes violence plus something else. This is where the expression 'going beyond violence' or 'violence going beyond itself' becomes appropriate and significant. Violence which goes beyond itself in the face of another violence, such as the violence of one's foe, enables one to respect the residual nonviolence that is in him and which can be awakened. There is a dialectical process of consciousness at work and the person who does not allow himself to be dragged into the vicious circle of violence enables the other to discover in himself the sweet nostalgia for nonviolence, which is agonizing but which can be awakened. Therefore he calls upon his own internal resources of transcendence to prevent the other from identifying with his own violence under which he might be strangled. It awakens in him the fragile chance of understanding nonviolence and, through it, of finding a way out, however tenuous, towards truth.

There is a kind of dialectical process here, between the conscience which makes itself available because it holds nonviolence dear to itself and the consciousness of the adversary, which will have a chance of going beyond its own violence and entering into the field of nonviolence. This is where

nonviolence which courts death becomes significant. It seems to me that this courting of death has a meaning for Gandhi which is quite different from the meaning that death has for Hegel. It is not so much a matter of engulfing oneself in the inevitable dialectical process for truth as of vanquishing the contrary conditions which cancel each other in history.

'Since my life was not enough to trouble my adversary, since my nonviolence was not enough for him to want to rediscover nonviolence and truth in himself, will perhaps my death begin to trouble him? Will it not awaken in him what my life could not awaken?' This is the kind of desperate call that goes out from a life which sacrifices itself in the hope that truth might be awakened in the other person. It is a very personal appeal and call; and if the adversary is completely insensitive to this kind of argument, if there is no residue of the lost truth in him which would have a chance of rebirth, the dialogue at the edge of the abyss could be desperate. This is why nonviolence is not simply a recipe which will work at any cost, but a risk one runs with the hope of success. If it were a recipe that would work at any cost, the cost would be extremely high though the recipe would be easy to use. I believe Gandhi's vision of history is a tragic one.

Olivier Lacombe

Mention has been made of Christian nonviolence. To tell the truth, Christianity has never spoken of nonviolence; it has mentioned compassion, meekness and charity. The nonviolence of the Buddha has also been mentioned. But I would ask you not to run the risk of anachronism, because in this context anachronism is erroneous. The message of Christ and the Buddha did not basically concern worldly life; they concerned the life eternal. If Christ had wanted to give a message for a better political state of affairs in his day, he would not have distanced himself, as he clearly did, from his countrymen, who anxiously cared for such a cause. This does not mean that the Buddhist or the Christian or the Hindu of today cannot venture, like Gandhi, to apply nonviolence or evangelical charity or Buddhist ahimsa to problems which concern political and social justice. Now, the religious problem is not within the competence of this symposium, but the political problem is.

It has been asked whether Gandhi wanted to abolish violence or to reduce it. He wanted both, he wanted to reduce it and also to vanquish it. But, as others have said, it involved an infinitely gradual process. Gandhi did not hope that violence would disappear overnight from this world. Rather he expected conditions to be created for violence to be eschewed as quickly as possible. He thought that

some people, himself among them, should act as though nonviolence was for here and now, and that through this breach the rest would follow. Thus in Gandhi we have simultaneously an idealist who presents the absolute ideal of nonviolence and a practical man who recognizes that, in some circumstances, others cannot march in step with him. In any case, as was said very accurately, one must on the one hand struggle against violence and, on the other hand, change world conditions in such a way that violence becomes less and less conceivable and possible as a temptation for the weak and the strong. This is what we are trying to do. We are trying to change the situation slowly, the general situation of humanity, so that the message of nonviolence begins to be heeded and there is no misunderstanding about it.

Enough emphasis has rightly been put on the fact that nonviolence, as Gandhi saw it, is eminently active. I like the expression used by Mr Ramachandran, who said that there was steel in Gandhi's temperament. Gandhi was indeed a man of steel. If he had not placed nonviolence above everything else, he would have been a violent fighter for justice. There can be no shadow of doubt about this. Yet what marked him out was the combination of purity, generosity and strength.

Arne Naess

By definition nonviolence is more than a technique or method; it has to do with basic attitudes. Therefore, to ask: 'Should we now fight this invasion by means of nonviolent action or by violent action?' is a wrong way of asking the question. In so far as there are believers in nonviolence they will unhesitatingly resist nonviolently, and some among them will become leaders of a nonviolent resistance. It will then be good enough, as stressed by Professor Ranga, for the masses, the followers without any views, to take part in the campaign, even if they do not believe in nonviolence as a principle.

The question raised in strategic institutions today is whether nonviolence is a good *technique* in the case of invasion. This question is in a sense a pseudo-question from the gandhian point of view. You cannot adopt nonviolence in the same way as you take to throwing stones. It is insane to ask a nation or group to answer an invasion with nonviolence if that nation or group does not have leaders who believe in nonviolence. There must be the cultivation of the basic attitude of nonviolence before the question becomes meaningful, that is, within the nation, long before the invasion takes place. When political leaders neglect nonviolent training, they anticipate the negative answer to the question of the use of nonviolence in an extreme

crisis.

Yasuaki Nara

Generally speaking, there are two aspects of any religion. The first is the deepening of one's self and the second is the aspect of service to society. Deepening the self, which is an inward process, and service of society, which is an outgoing process, must go hand in hand. The more one deepens one's self and comes nearer to truth, the more one's influence on the environment becomes intensified. Surrounded by misery and suffering, it is natural for a religious person to feel compassion towards the masses. It is also an accepted norm that a man of faith chooses his acts on the basis of truth, without regard to how they are evaluated by the general public. He must act on whatever he believes to be right. Thus, within the framework of religion, the ethical judgement must be situational. This is typically the way of ethics in Buddhism, which distinguishes between discipline and rules. Discipline must come spontaneously from one's hold over truth, whereas rules are what are imposed upon society, so that social life may be conducted smoothly. When Gandhi said that he always followed the voice within him, which must be the voice of truth, it showed how far his conduct was typically religious.

 For Gandhi, ahimsa is the path of love, which is

no other than the duty that everyone has to follow, whether he is a Hindu, Christian or Buddhist. It is the kind of duty that must be fulfilled at any cost, even at the cost of death. In the case of Gandhi, since his deepening of the self in the religious sense was so intense, he had to adhere to this duty of love for mankind at any cost, even at the cost of death. Whence his satyagraha movement, which is a practical means of achieving this state of universal love, fighting what he felt was wrong and recovering justice in society. As the Working Document rightly points out, even if it does a kind of mental violence to the adversary, it does not matter. To love is to recover truth and to recover truth is the highest duty of man, which must take precedence over everything else.

Gandhi also said that he was not concerned with the result, but only did his duty. This is, of course, the influence of the *Bhagavad Gita,* which was one of his favourite books. The *Bhagavad Gita* places much importance on doing one's duty and it openly encourages killing on the battlefield. If a war is a war of justice, one must fight that war, because it is the ultimate means to recover justice. To Gandhi, however, war is never commendable as the highest means. He firmly believed that what wins last is not physical violence but the path of love, although it is true that sometimes he used words which appear to encourage physical violence. The Working

 Document has picked up some specimens of such

statements which appear to encourage physical violence, but I believe they are of a contextual nature. In a certain situation, Gandhi strongly felt it necessary to emphasize courage and reject cowardice in order to fulfil one's duty. This, I think, has resulted in such expressions. It is proved by the later portions of these statements. For example, he has said that swaraj is the ultimate goal of the nation and not nonviolence; that India should destroy the invader by violence and become free rather than remain a slave. But this is just an assumption. Violence would never have been able to liberate India. Swaraj had to be won only by the weapons of the spirit—love and the following of truth. Thus the relationship between violence, I mean physical violence, and nonviolence should be understood contextually.

Lanza del Vasto

What I have to say, I think, will contradict nothing of what has already been said by my predecessors. But if we examine Gandhi's book of confession, what he has characteristically called 'My Experiments with Truth', we shall discover that from his childhood onwards, his first quest was not for truth but for strength. He was looking for a way to strength, having felt in the course of his childhood the sadness and humiliation of being weak—a weak man in a weak nation, shackled by

the troubles of tradition and prejudice. The so-called great sins and crimes of his childhood, which he recalls, are smoking, eating meat and the carnal act. What was he looking for? Not pleasure or the satisfaction of certain curiosities, but he was looking for strength. He was looking for the sources of strength. Indeed he said this much, that he wanted to be free from weakness and cowardice.[c]

What did he have in front of him? The Englishman, this person who was a source both of terror and admiration, a kind of demon who advanced upon him with a piece of red meat in one hand and a glass of whisky in the other, as he himself said. This demon or dragon, what is the source of his strength and power? He eats meat. So I too will try and eat good flesh and possibly strength will come to me. So he smokes, drinks spirits of wine and goes to see loose women. He did all this, violating deeply his habits and his moral tenets. Then he realized that the worst of all these horrors was that he was compelled to lie. And liberation comes on the day when he confesses all this to his father and sees, as the only punishment meted out to him, tears in his father's eyes. It is not, I think, in vain that this experience occurred in the early stages of Gandhi's life.

c. Cf. Gandhi in *Young India,* 17 September 1925: 'The whole scheme for the liberation of India is based upon the development of internal strength.'

These are not just picturesque anecdotes which he recalls merely for the pleasure of telling stories from his childhood. They refer to something that is very deep-set, something that is figured to bring about changes of great consequence. You see, later on, the way he violates the demands of his caste at the risk of himself becoming an untouchable. In fact, he did become one by leaving India, which was forbidden at the time and for which he was arraigned by the elders of his caste. But he was quite unconcerned with all this. He did not even try and repair the damage done, his brother having had to assume the responsibility of clearing up the consequences of his act for him.

What was he looking for in England? To complete his studies and become a lawyer? To have a sound position in society? Possibly; but certainly something more than that. He wanted to go to the core, the centre, the heart of this prestigious empire which held sway at the time over a quarter of the human race. He was trying to discover the secret of its power and strength. After all the humiliations to which he had been subjected he was, shall we say, pulling himself up by his bootstraps when he tried to dance the polka. Indeed these somewhat ridiculous situations to which he deliberately submits himself—why? In order to try and work his way to the heart of British power. I think this is the real process, the discovery of the famous rakshasa, the Englishman, who at close range is after all not

as terrifying as all that. He is a person, quite a kindly one, with a pink and white complexion, with his frailties, his ironies, his very great fear of offending you, someone who is kindly, humane, more or less like everybody else. Then how is it possible that he should dominate over so many people? Where is the secret spring of this empire that has dominated the whole world, and drained away and hoarded so much of its riches? I think this is not so much a quest for truth as for the meaning of truth which tears the myth asunder for him and brings him nearer to a quest for strength, other than the one that he had undertaken, and hence encourages him to return to India and turn to another form of quest.

While in England, it has been very well observed, Gandhi felt both extremely deep Indian roots and a sort of moral separation from them. It was in England that he came nearest to these roots through an English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. India, I like to think, was rather his wife than his mother. He says so himself: 'I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults. I daresay she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations.'[17] Thus he discovered the infinite nuances of Hinduism, as a lover discovers the woman he loves. And I think we

must find here his Hindu being, apart from, of course, the habits and practices of his religion, which he never abandoned even in the heart of his exile. such as being a vegetarian and being continent.

G. Ramachandran

I listened with profound interest to what Professor Hersch said about Gandhi's oft-quoted statement, that 'where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence'.[18] She described it as 'a way of speaking'. Gandhi ends that statement by saying, 'But I believe that nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence'. I have tried to study the thought behind this statement for a long time and I have come to the conclusion that for Gandhi the first imperative is action—and then the inescapable second is nonviolence. This comes straight out of the *Gita*. In my opinion, there is no nonviolence in the *Gita*. But there is in the *Gita* the challenge to action in the face of a situation. It is symbolized in two figures—Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna drops his weapons and says, 'I do not want to fight, because it means the killing of so many of my kith and kin'. Krishna says, 'Take up your weapons and fight because it is your duty to fight'. Out of the *Gita*, Gandhi got the lesson that action is the essence of truthful living.

Gandhi was once talking to some of us in the Sevagram ashram and, as far as I remember, these

were his words: 'You might follow the Ten Commandments of the Bible. You might even follow the 101 commandments of Gandhi—put on khadi, touch no liquor, serve the untouchable, etc. etc.—but if the challenge of a moral action came to you and you evaded it, then all the other disciplines to which you gave allegiance are wiped out altogether and you have committed moral and spiritual suicide.' The first imperative of Gandhi was to act—here, now, in the living present—against injustice and evil. In doing so, his inevitable corollary was that that action to be truly effective must be nonviolent. So when he said, 'where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence', he was expressing his passionate conviction that there must be action, not words, not thought, in the face of a contingency. As Professor Hersch said, this was his way of clearing nonviolence from the odium that it is inaction, cowardice and running away.

Mr Farhadi raised the question of Gandhi's attitude on the Kashmir war of 1947. I have personally discussed this matter with Gandhi and he told me that nobody consulted him on Kashmir. He was grappling with the Hindu-Muslim troubles in India when this action was taken by the Government of India. During my argument with him, he turned round and said to me: 'Do you believe that the Government of India is a nonviolent government? It is by no means a nonviolent government. Surely

such a government can act only according to its own manner. It never consulted me in advance. Had it asked me, I would have made my mind clear.' He enunciated his stand clearly during the second world war when the Japanese were knocking at the doors of India. He had then prepared the masses of India, through innumerable workers whom he had sent into the coastal areas of India, to paralyse an invasion by absolutely non-cooperating with the invader, refusing to carry out his commands and denying him all supplies. So it is not as though, either over Kashmir or over the probable Japanese invasion of India, he evaded an issue.

The fundamental issue confronting us is: Can we have humanism without nonviolence? Gandhi's answer was crystal clear. He had no doubt whatsoever in his mind that we would never achieve true humanism except through nonviolence. We have had instances of freedom being achieved through violence. It is not as though freedom has never been achieved through violence. But whether humanism has been achieved anywhere in the world through violence is a question we must face without equivocation.

We have had two world wars and we may well be on the threshold of a third world war. It is idle to imagine that, having stockpiled weapons of incalculable destructive power and with the super-powers all the time jostling against each other for the dominance of the world, these weapons

would never be used. Can anyone tell me why untold wealth and technique and effort are put into the production of these weapons and then they sit down together to find out how best *not to use them*? If this is not senile idiocy, I do not know what it is. It is in the face of this absurd situation that Gandhi's challenge comes.

People imagine that nonviolence is very difficult and costly to the person who gives allegiance to it. But is violence cheap? Is defence through armaments cheap? Will not millions perish? Has it not been calculated that within 24 hours of a nuclear war, 150 millions of people on either side, men, women and children, would die? Is it a cheap price to pay? Instead of paying that price of mutually destroying each other, Gandhi said, 'Let us face death without flinching'. Let me conclude by saying that, in the economy of God's wisdom, nonviolence is more practical, more effective and perhaps the only way of escaping the total annihilation that confronts us today.

Jeanne Hersch

It seems to me that one important element that has not been mentioned in this exploration of nonviolence is that in Gandhi it gets its strength only through the deep independence of the one who practises it. When I say independence, I mean an
 asceticism, a kind of autarky on the part of the

person who practises it. It is to the extent that he has become independent of others through the reduction of his own needs that his nonviolence finds its external effectiveness. An understanding of these two facets—what may be called the voice within and the voice without—is extremely important. It is from the voice within that nonviolence acquires the strength over oneself which prevents its being confused with cowardice. From the outside, this ascetic autarky gives effectiveness to nonviolence by the possibility of generalizing it into a massive strike. Non-cooperation has, as its condition, this preliminary asceticism; otherwise it is impracticable. Unless one has practised this kind of asceticism, non-cooperation is impossible. The internal and external effectiveness of nonviolence has to be bought at this price, and a good deal of preliminary work is necessary for gaining this effectiveness. Otherwise, nonviolence is the same thing as cowardice or running away, if I understand Gandhi correctly.

Marie-Pierre Herzog

I am surprised that I have not heard in the course of this discussion any definition of nonviolence in relation to the cosmic vision of Indian thought and the influence of Jainism on Gandhi. It seems to me that in nonviolence there is the idea of a profound and deep agreement with everything that lives. But

we have been looking at nonviolence in a context that is far too western and from the point of view of a dialogue with other people, to the extent that this is possible by the slow, methodical and rational western way. I think the cosmic background of nonviolence should be stated more explicitly.

William Eteki-Mboumoua

Nonviolence calls for a dialogue, an understanding, on the assumption that one can be heard by the other party. If one hopes to be heard, it is perhaps because one has already situated oneself in a certain world of understanding. On the part of Gandhi, it was not surprising that he knew his English adversaries. We might indeed ask whether, if some other nation had colonized India, the same nonviolent technique would have yielded the same fruit. There is necessarily a dialogue in nonviolence, because through it you wish to convince the other party and to bring him to discover in you not his adversary, but a man like him. This call, this appeal, can be a prayer or an impassioned argument.

Lanza del Vasto

There are two kinds of nonviolence—the passive nonviolence of Hinduism and Gandhi's active nonviolence. Passive nonviolence is deeply etched in
 Indian mores and traditions. What distinguishes the

Indian from other peoples is his horror of killing. Other peoples are enamoured of killing; they kill for pleasure. It is a sobering experience for others to live in India and watch how all classes of people there hesitate genuinely when they see an insect, a mouse, a snake. One might ask, what is so noble in this attitude? It should be apparent, especially to Christians, that it is not only the respect but the veneration for life which is at stake. Life is God or, rather, God is life. We have life, and an earthworm has life; and there is only one life, as there is only one light. There is not a separate animal and vegetable life, or an intellectual and spiritual life. In the face of any living being we must be struck with wonder and feel the presence of something infinitely mysterious and profound. This is what keeps back the hand of the Indian. This is why the Indian housewife must atone for her sin if she has ground down an ant by moving a water jug. But Gandhi's nonviolence was something else, a different kind of nonviolence. It was not separated from the former at all; rather it continued it, it went over and beyond it. It discovered new dimensions, particularly through the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Gospels. Western people do not see the relationship between the reverence for life and nonviolence. We thus have pacifists who eat steaks. This is not what Gandhi would have done.

Romesh Thapar

It would be wrong to draw a distinction between Indian passivity and non-passivity. I think the Indian is capable of brutalities comparable to those of the western world; and we see such brutalities taking place every now and then in India. We have, I fear, discussed truth and nonviolence in isolation. But we must go back to their basic linkage in Gandhi's humanism. The two are inseparable for Gandhi; but for the wide mass of people who followed him the two were not inseparable. They often acted without the dedication or the preparation of a satyagrahi.

On the question of defence, Gandhi's position is quite clear. There can be no better defence than nonviolence, but it requires a united community dedicated to nonviolence, and understanding the spirit of nonviolence from within and without. If you do not have that, it does not necessarily make you a coward, but the process of violent defence is in itself self-destructive, particularly for a people as oppressed and as bereft of strength as the Indian people.

It is necessary to keep in mind the duality in Gandhi's approach—rigidity towards himself and his immediate disciples and extreme flexibility towards those who followed him imperfectly. He was not a man who demanded that anyone who joined his movement must abandon eating flesh. His closest

comrades-in-arms were flesh eaters, including Nehru himself. This did not change the relationship between Gandhi and Nehru. But, of course, Gandhi was a vegetarian and I am sure, if you probe deeper, you will find that Gandhi believed that the man who dedicated himself to nonviolence, who would not be violent, would have to be a vegetarian.

Olivier Lacombe

I believe this discussion, which has lasted for a whole day, is not concluded, but it was clear from the outset that we would not reach a conclusion. This is not necessarily a defeat. The subject is inexhaustible and we have passed over certain aspects of it or have not had time to deal with them. Have we reached a consensus or some kind of a converging mind? Here is what my feeling is for what it is worth.

I do not think there has been any serious divergence in our thinking. On the surface, we did follow parallel lines rather than convergent ones. Nevertheless, little by little, and despite differences in terminology, modes of expression and points of view, many essential features of the subject were not only mentioned but covered adequately; and each one of us can, on the basis of this discussion, find some centre of convergence. This in itself is a great deal, I believe. I do not think we shall have failed in our duty if our work today not only prepares for

tomorrow and the day after. but also enables each one of us to find a focus for the interpretation of the action and thinking of Gandhi.

A question was raised by Professor Hersch concerning the relation between the absolute and practical relativism, both in Hinduism and in the general attitude of Gandhi. This question is an echo of what Mr Thapar had said. To exhaust the question, one would have to tackle purely metaphysical questions, but please do not expect this of me now. In contrast with the usual modes and pathways of western thinking, what is striking in Indian thinking is the polymorphism of the Hindu religious and worldly consciousness, together with a steadfast aspiration towards an absolute which one can hope to be merged in or 'realize', but which one could never define or adequately speak of. This is, of course, nothing more than what may be called the feeling of average Hinduism.

When we speak of Hinduism or Hindu dharma, we are really dealing with a complex phenomenon with many currents and attitudes. To answer in a straightforward way would be to miss this complexity. Hinduism is a culture. Orthodox Hinduism is proud of not having had any founding father; there is not the will or the unity of a single creative human mind at its source. There is, rather, a kind of multi-faceted expansion. This is what Hinduism is. I know there are many missing links in my reasoning, if reasoning it is, but this is where

you will have to start in order to answer in a pertinent way. These Hindu concepts are quite different from the absolute and the relative as understood in the West. It is another way of approaching and tackling the relationship between these two concepts.

Professor Naess was right in saying that you disfigure nonviolence when you make a technique out of it. Of course, as Mr Ramachandran explained to us, action came first for Gandhi, and nonviolent action only subsequently, and not in succession, chiefly because it is the best form of action. But this does not make of it a technique, recipe or expedient. If there is no absolute recipe or infallible technique, it is because the human being is fallible and circumstances always carry an element of risk. I think Professor Habachi laid emphasis on this. The element of risk remains not because the absolute is not the absolute, not because nonviolence is not the best way, but because our world is not a world of pure nonviolence. Gandhi, of course, accepted to run the risk.

Professor Hersch was right in underscoring the link between autarky and non-cooperation. It is certain that education, as Gandhi sees it, makes or should make everyone self-sufficient. This is the meaning of autarky. It does not mean that one has to be an ascetic or a yogi, withdrawing within oneself, but that one should be self-sufficient and free, so as to be able to let generosity and love prevail, in

circumstances of maximal, if not absolute, personal independence.

Finally, I should like to thank Mrs Herzog for recalling that—although Gandhi hardly emphasizes this aspect, since he did not usually deal with such problems—nonviolence from the Indian or Hindu point of view rests upon the deep conviction that amidst the diversity and conflict in the world there is an underlying unity, a soul. Now, should this word soul be equated with God or should we maintain and lay more emphasis upon the transcendence of the absolute as against this world? These are problems which all philosophers, both Indian and other, have discussed. But the general feeling is that there is a unity behind the superficial differences and conflicts.

second working session

application of truth and nonviolence in gandhi's teaching and work

16 october 1969

chairman: g ramachandran

On a request from the Chairman, Mr G. Ramachandran, Dr Carlos P. Romulo addressed the session.

Carlos Romúlo

The Filipino people have always responded spontaneously to Gandhi's appeal. As a Catholic people, Gandhi to us exemplified Christian virtues like humility, self-perfection, charity, concern for the rightness of both means and ends and love for all men, for enemies as well as friends. Moreover, a Filipino seems to us to have been in a very real sense one of Gandhi's precursors—Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines. He was only a little older than Gandhi, having been born in 1861, eight years before him. Like Gandhi, Rizal led an exemplary life, utterly dedicated to his people. Like him, he believed that the freedom of his country should be attained by truthful and nonviolent means. And like him, he died a martyr without hate or rancour, upholding to the very end his faith in truth and justice and nonviolence. But unlike Gandhi, who lived to witness the independence of India in his 78th year, Rizal died in 1896, when he was only 35 years of age and when the Philippine national revolution against more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule was just beginning. But Rizal's moral impact on the Filipino people was so profound and his martyrdom marked such a fateful

turn in the history of the Philippines—he was executed by the Spaniards—that he came to be regarded, like Gandhi, as the Father of the Nation.

Gandhi's career covered a vast stage and half a century of time. It started in his early twenties in South Africa, where, a victim of apartheid, he used nonviolence as a technique of mass political action against injustice. It ended with his assassination in India in 1948, during his last heroic effort to quell through self-sacrifice the bloody communal fighting between Hindus and Muslims. In between, translating moral force into political power, he had transformed a nation, peacefully vanquished an empire and left an indelible mark upon his time.

In both hemispheres, Gandhi was a towering figure in men's minds. Louis Fischer, one of his biographers, described him as a great and unique person, perhaps the greatest figure of the last 1900 years. He has been compared to St. Francis, to the Buddha and to Christ himself. When I interviewed him in the holy city of Banaras, in 1940, I called him the 'Living Christ'. Einstein wrote of Gandhi: 'Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth'. Tolstoy ascribed world significance to his struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa. Even his antagonists respected and admired him for his principles of truth and nonviolence. General Smuts said of Gandhi, whom he had caused to be imprisoned: 'It was my fate to be the

antagonist of a man for whom even then I had the highest respect. In prison, he had prepared for me a very useful pair of sandals which he presented to me when he was set free. I had worn those sandals for many a summer since then, even though I feel I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man.'

India was the proving ground of Gandhi's teachings and his sublime example. Nehru called him the soul of India and the light of Asia. At Gandhi's call, wrote Tagore, 'India blossomed forth into a new greatness, just as once before in earlier times, when the Buddha proclaimed the trust of fellow feeling and compassion among all living creatures'. But the significance of Gandhi's life and his principles of truth and nonviolence transcended the boundaries of India. The essence of his appeal addressed itself to the conscience of man and the response was universal. Truth, which to Gandhi was another name for God, was the end he sought and nonviolence powered by love was his chosen means of attaining it. He worked and sacrificed to end India's colonial bondage. But freedom to him meant something more than political independence. He said, 'I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever.'[19] And he spelt it out in these words: 'I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of

people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability, or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men.... This is the India of my dreams.'[20]

For Gandhi, truth was of supreme importance. He valued it higher than freedom and did not hesitate to say, 'I would far rather that India perished than that she won freedom at the sacrifice of truth'.[21] This is important to remember. As the worldwide commemoration of the Gandhi Centenary draws to a close, some who have praised the work of Gandhi. losing sight of the immutable values which he preached and personified, have tended to be negative. They cast critical eyes on present-day India and observe that, after two decades of independence, it does not yet correspond to the India of Gandhi's dreams. And from this they conclude that the gandhian legacy is in an eclipse from which it may never emerge with anything like its original lustre. What these critics overlook is that twenty years is too short a time in which to gauge with any finality the worth and impact of a man of Gandhi's stature. They forget that Gandhi's message was not for his time alone or for ours, but for all ages. They fail to realize that while Gandhi's crusade focussed on India, its implications embrace the whole world. In a sense, the concept of one world as the ultimate goal of humanity came naturally to Gandhi. He

believed in the Vedantic doctrine that the whole world is one family. Amidst the preoccupations of the struggle for the liberation of India, Gandhi was already looking beyond national independence. 'I would like to see India free and strong', he said, 'so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world'.[22] 'Through the realization of the freedom of India, I hope to realize and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man.'[23] On other occasions, he made more explicit commitments. Once he wrote: 'If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are indeed in their essentials for the whole world.'[24] And he said in a tone of finality: 'I would not like to live in this world if it is not to be one world.'[25] He envisaged a world federation of interdependent states, the structure of which would be raised on a foundation of nonviolence, after violence will have been totally given up in world affairs. He was no wide-eyed visionary. He realized that one world could not be built in a day. He had no panacea to offer, nothing but the hard, narrow, uncompromising road to perfection, the individual sacrificing himself for the good of the family, the family for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation and the nation prepared to die if necessary for the benefit of the world.

Stated baldly, without the grace and charm of

 Gandhi's irresistible personality, it sounds too

idealistic for serious consideration. But on reflection, one may well ask, is not this in the last analysis the meaning of the famous Unesco dictum that 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'?

Obsession with mass and magnitude, and the concern for mass poverty, mass murder and mass deprivation of human rights—these somehow obscure the importance and the key role of the individual person. Man tends to evade personal responsibility and to pass it on to national governments and eventually to the United Nations. In Gandhi's eyes, every single human being was important and was entitled to the respect due to his inherent God-given dignity, and every man had the potential to start a chain reaction of dedication to nonviolence and truth—from himself to his family, to his nation, and so on, until its impact was felt in the entire world.

Another towering figure of our time, Dr Schweitzer, expressed the same idea in his own way. He said: 'The question for any man is not how he can take hold of the great forces, but how he can take hold of his own life and put it to good use.' On whatever plane it is viewed, the relevance of Gandhi's message to the world of today is undeniable. Nonviolence, truth, tolerance, respect for human rights—all these precepts, exemplified to an heroic degree by Gandhi, have meaning for us

today. Simply to state the gandhian precepts is to recognize them, expressed in different language, among the major goals proclaimed in the UN Charter. Indeed, Gandhi's message of truth and nonviolence has gained fresh immediacy in the thermo-nuclear age. It has ceased to be a mere sermon. It has become an indispensable condition, the sine qua non of humanity's survival.

Gandhi was the humblest of men, but he was proud of the ancient wisdom of Asia. Wisdom, he said, came to the West from the East. And who are these wise men? 'The first of these wise men was Zoroaster. He belonged to the East. He was followed by the Buddha, who belonged to the East —India. Who followed the Buddha? Jesus, who came from the East. Before Jesus was Moses, who belonged to Palestine, though he was born in Egypt. After Jesus came Mohammed.... I do not know a single person in the world to match these men of Asia.'[26] And Gandhi went on to say that the message of the East, the message of Asia 'is not to be learnt through the western spectacles or by imitating the atom bomb. If you want to give a message to the West, it must be the message of love and the message of truth.'[27]

The great soul in beggar's garb, Gandhi has been the bearer of that message and today it is addressed not to the West alone, but to all mankind.

G. Ramachandran

Gandhi had an analysis of the world situation, but it started with India. He looked at India and at the world and said, 'If our aim is a just and free human society, leading to the well-being of every man and woman in this world, why then are we drifting away, in spite of the advances of science and technology and the material prosperity piling up before our eyes, from the concept of one world, of a united, peaceful and just human existence?' Anyone who knew Gandhi would know that he was a relentless logician. He would not say something and then run away from the consequences of what he said. To posit an idea and to follow it to the end—that is how a revolution is born. Gandhi looked at India and said, 'What is the kind of India I am seeing? An India utterly fragmented into communities, castes and subcastes; after two centuries of so-called enlightened rule, terrific poverty gripping millions of people.' Gandhi asked, why should there be this terrific poverty after 200 years of what some would call the enlightened rule of the British people? No unity, no prosperity, the people utterly cowed down, and fear reigning in their hearts. Contemplating this picture of the reality of India, Gandhi came to the irresistible and imperative conclusion that no rule of one nation over another, however good, is good for the ruled nation and that subjection is totally ruinous to a

country. This was his analysis. But deep in his heart, even as he came back from South Africa, he had made up his mind that the revolution in India must be a nonviolent one to be effective. No other revolution was possible in India except a nonviolent revolution. The people had been completely disarmed. Nobody could carry arms. An unarmed people can only fight an unarmed revolution—this is the irresistible logic of reality. Basing himself on this analysis and method, Gandhi began building up India. It is to this building up of India that we must give thought today—how he applied his principle of nonviolence in reshaping and remoulding the life of the people.

Romesh Thapar

It would be inaccurate to suggest or to imply that Gandhi evolved certain principles of political, economic and social action and then just applied them to India. The first experiments in Africa were to be profoundly conditioned by the realities of the Indian situation. If we were to distil the major consideration which marked Gandhi's strategy and tactic of mass action, we would discover that the principles which he had experimented with in Africa had great relevance to the demands of the Indian situation. The concepts of nonviolence, satyagraha, struggle for truth and swadeshi (or self-reliance) provided the basic ingredients of a kind of amalgam

for India's liberation as a united, secular, democratic and egalitarian society. These words are important in the context of Gandhi's perspectives—united, secular, democratic and egalitarian. These objectives were the purified means to serve a noble end. In Gandhi's view, a compromise on the means would only shatter the end in sight. Let me explain this in greater detail.

When Gandhi resolved to lift the struggle of the Indian people from elitist constitutionalism to the plane of mass action, he put his ideas to systematic tests and linked them closely with what he perceived to be the key realities of the Indian situation. I think it would be a good idea to stress these realities, as he saw them at the time, rather than work on the assumption of Gandhi's being a saint. In the context of his political leadership, Gandhi was a very practical and pragmatic man. What were these realities of the Indian situation which impressed him? First, the unity of a multi-faceted sub-continent? Every political undertaking had to cherish this unity. It was a fragile unity, fractured by many invasions and by other divisive forces in the past several hundred years. It could not be taken for granted. While many other nations could take their unity for granted, not so India. Political leaders, Gandhi explained, had to be always conscious that their actions did not fracture Indian unity. A whole sub-continent, with its many cultural patterns, had to be preserved. Neglect of any one

region or community could shatter the mosaic of Indian unity.

Closely linked to this concept of unity was the equally imperative need somehow to bridge the extraordinary gulf between a colonially-sponsored elite and a downtrodden people. The entire thinking apparatus of India was a product of British rule and the people were reduced to a kind of helotism. I am not one of those who hold the view that the British had many beautiful things to contribute to India. It depends on one's view of history. Given 150 years of extra freedom, I am sure Indians too would have contributed to their own country. However, seeing this situation in India, where the body was separated from the head, Gandhi had to unite them. This was really a matter of building a new elan, whose creativeness would come from the instruments of struggle.

Finally, the fact that the enemy was British imperialism, powerful, brutal, capable of many complex moves associated with overlordship, like divide and rule and throwing one community against another—the most extraordinary hundred-year exercise which was performed in India—and yet an imperialism which was sensitive to moral pressures because of a lively democratic conscience at home. This was not an unimportant consideration in planning the nonviolent liberation of India. Moral force, as symbolized in satyagraha, could be

 a powerful weapon against an oppressor with a

democratic conscience. Gandhi never lost sight of these three facets of the Indian situation while planning his satyagraha, based on ahimsa and swadeshi. Imagine what a different Gandhi would have emerged if India had been a compact, single nation state under the jackboot of a Fascist power. I believe Gandhi was no romantic; he was a skilled and astute political leader. He advanced a thesis of revolt which captured the age-old dream of the Indian mind. But he died convinced that he had failed, and failed utterly, because the very weapon that he had forged for the unity of India had failed to preserve that unity. India lay partitioned and slaughtered. But even though he did not say so, we know that he had in fact sown a seed which would sprout in many lands, in many mutations.

Political liberation for Gandhi was a vast envelope of other experimental attitudes. Economic liberation was to come through swadeshi or self-reliance. This was a basic concept. If this made the Indian rich richer, the concept of trusteeship was projected. Here you see a very complex kind of leader. Take 'trusteeship' in today's world. Mr Ramachandran may be able to explain to us what we are to understand from it. In Gandhi you see a man rooted in his period of time, in his period of transition, in the compelling realities of the Indian struggle. He could not take positions which would fracture the struggle of the Indian people against British imperialism and so he brought the entire masses of

the subcontinent within disciplines which they would understand. Trusteeship was an old, traditional Indian concept. The Hindu caste system was not denounced, only untouchability was treated as a disease. Religious tolerance was vital to India, but the tolerance which was advocated was the tolerance of an overwhelmingly powerful Hindu community which could afford to be tolerant. Education was to be basic, linked to everyday needs, not the creation of men and women who would shatter orthodoxy and proclaim the reign of rationality, of science and technology, geared to the growth of an enlightened society. I do not want to judge Gandhi against these limitations and inhibitions. We must view him as a political leader, disciplined and surrounded by the pressures of political leadership, by the logic of the freedom struggle. He could not be a purist, he could not be a saint leading the Indian people to freedom. He had to be a political leader and I am sure that if he had lived into the years of freedom, we would have seen a vast change in his thinking on these matters.

I call these attitudes experimental because Gandhi necessarily had to design every concept or theory to serve the goal of liberation. He could not risk, in the course of the freedom struggle, the popularization of concepts which would polarize the movement, create ideological rifts and come in the way of unified action over a complex sub-continent.

 Of course, some will argue that Gandhi was always

free to do what he willed, but this is far from the truth. Like any other, he was deeply influenced by the considerations flowing from the struggle for freedom. We must, therefore, look on his universalism to discover the ideas which he was unable to apply. His dramatic appeal to the leaders and activists of the Indian National Congress—at their moment of triumph—to abjure power and turn to the service of the people carried within it, I believe, a massive germinal idea which will have to recur over and over again, if our country is to renew itself in every generation for the advance of the human spirit.

Yahia El-Khachab

In dealing with nonviolence in the field of economics, we must remember that Gandhi's economic concepts are primarily based on the welfare of the poor people of India. Millions of Indians are landless peasants, naked and underfed. They should have the right to work, to eat sufficiently, to be educated and to have their own homes. This is the truth that every rich man in India must recognize. If everyone in India would realize that he should not possess more than what he actually wants, the country could soon attain economic equality and build a happy, collaborating society free from hatred or fear.

Gandhi does not want to dispossess those who

have possessions. That would be departing from nonviolence. He wants them rather to abdicate their surplus wealth in favour of the poor. He wants them to avoid a revolution, the violent revolution of the landless who are in need of land and homes. This is the truth. This truth can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These, Gandhi says, should be available to all, as God's air and water are, or ought to be. They should not be made a vehicle for the exploitation of others. Economics, he says, never militates against high ethical standards, just as all true ethics, to be worth its name, must be also good economics. Everyone should begin with himself if he believes in this truth, without waiting for others to precede him. Gandhi knows that it is difficult for a man to give up his wealth. Wealth is sometimes dearer than children. But this must not stop us from pursuing our goal, even if we cannot realize it completely.

Gandhi certainly knew that there were other ways of dispossession or redistribution of land—by means of violence, and with the help of governmental laws, whether with or without compensation. But he preferred his own way. Dispossession, he felt, should be voluntary and without violence. Violent action in this respect, he estimated, could not benefit society. Society would be the poorer for it, since it would lose the gift of men who know how to accumulate wealth. The result of Gandhi's concept would be

that the rich man would be left in possession of his wealth, but of which he would use only what he reasonably requires for his personal needs, acting as a trustee for the remainder, to be used for the good of society. If men's minds turn towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in society.

After Gandhi's death, Vinoba Bhave, the most gifted of his followers, accepted the challenge of Indian poverty and launched a nationwide movement to solve it by voluntary means. His movement of Bhoodan has already won from the landowners millions of acres of land for distribution among the landless. Vinoba, the saint on the march, is showing the people how to create the kind of state which Gandhi dreamt of, a state where everyone participates in its welfare without the interference of a government. This is an aspect of the nonviolent concept in Gandhi's thought. This concept of land distribution ought to be studied by economists and politicians, side by side with the other theories of distribution of land. In my opinion, Gandhi's concept merits examination as the peaceful way of solving the problem of the landless, homeless and naked people in the developing countries of the world today.

M. Drobyshev

 I think Gandhi's economic views can hardly be

regarded as the product of some specific school of economic thought, be it Indian or foreign. There is rather every reason to look upon them as a projection of his ethical outlook upon the economic sphere. This is not to mean that Gandhi was not knowledgeable in the principal economic theories of his time. Of course, he knew all these theories. Nor was he blind to economic reality. On the contrary, Gandhi perceived this reality in all its starkness and it could not but affect his views. Yet the fundamental principle underlying the economic thought of Gandhi is to me quite clear. Gandhi goes from the ethical to the economic. His economic theory is a reflection of his ethical outlook. Like other Soviet economists, I hold views on the development of human society which are entirely different from those of Gandhi. But it is not, I believe, the intention of this symposium to examine Gandhi's views vis-a-vis our modern concepts, so much as to discuss him as a historical phenomenon, to trace his ideology to its sources and to try to analyse the rationale of his thinking.

One characteristic feature of Gandhi's economic views is his relative indifference towards the problem of production expansion. This may be because, in keeping with the Oriental tradition rooted in Buddhism, Gandhi strove to curb human needs rather than to satisfy them. To attain the gandhian ethical ideal no appreciable expansion of production is needed. Indeed, he believed that expansion of

production brought forth new wants, with all their corrupt effects on men. This concept, by and large, underlines Gandhi's approach to the problems of the development of productive forces. The progress of man, as the core of the productive forces, is an essential aspect of their development. Generally speaking, Gandhi doubtless stood for man's perfection. He believed that the principle of nonviolence could be one of the most powerful tools for perfecting man. But the awakening of the humane in man and the raising of his moral standards is one thing and the improvement of his professional skill quite another.

An important prerequisite for increasing the value of man as a worker is division of labour. However, under the influence of ancient Indian religions and philosophies, on the one hand, and such nineteenth century American and European authors as Thoreau, Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy, on the other, Gandhi came to the conclusion that man must live by his own labour, which implies not only renunciation of parasitic living and the necessity for each to make his contribution to the labour effort of society, but more particularly production by one's own hand of all or almost all means of subsistence. Obviously this interpretation of the necessity of personal labour is associated with the idea of nonviolence. Coordination of labour efforts and guidance of the activity of groups of workers are implicit in the division of labour, if it is to reach

any considerable proportions. In Gandhi's environment, this inevitably involved some form of violence. It cannot be denied that in a world where organization of labour and violence are synonymous, any consistent proponent of nonviolence would see the ideal worker in a man individually producing in direct contact with nature all or almost all the means of his subsistence. Such a worker would seem violence-proof at least in the economic sphere.

Gandhi evidently viewed as ideal the division of labour at the level of an Indian village community. In his ideal of village self-government, the village is a genuine republic independent of its neighbours, in the sense that it meets its vital needs, and yet is dependent in terms of dependence in necessity. The primary concern of each village would be growing food crops and cotton, so that it would be provided with its own food and clothing. The village would have a stock of fodder for the cattle and if there is surplus land, it could grow useful marketable crops. As far as possible, all work would be done on a cooperative basis. On the face of it, by allowing the cultivation of marketable produce Gandhi seems somewhat to depart from the principle of nonviolence, for the entry of the village into the capitalist market would automatically involve it in the sphere of violence. But, of course, by his system of commercial relations, Gandhi means a violence-free system, and further, if violence could be

precluded, he allows not only internal, national but also external, international trade. However, there still remains the question of how this trade, which is associated with the deeper division of labour, increase in productivity and expanding production, can be correlated with Gandhi's desire to confine consumption to the bare necessities of life.

The problem of the division of labour is interwoven with another aspect of the development of productive forces, namely, technological progress. Gandhi was outspoken in his opposition to what he thought to be excessive improvement of the means of production. His reasons for this were many. For instance, he thought that this kind of improvement would mean a race for material benefits with the consequent neglect of spiritual values. But here too, nonviolence had a part to play. As a consistent adherent of nonviolence, Gandhi was naturally hostile to the idea of the machine subjugating man and inevitably bringing about some degree of concentrated control and guidance of labour activity. Nevertheless, as shrewdly pointed out by Jawaharlal Nehru, it was not so much machines that Gandhi resisted as their being used to the detriment of man, a trend which he perceived in his environment. One of the chief arguments used by Gandhi against machines was that they led, in the India of his time, to unemployment. On this Jawaharlal Nehru commented: '...The fault surely is not that there is no work to do, but that under

the present profit system, the work is not profitable enough to the employers. There is an abundance of work simply calling out to be done. . . . All our millions can work hard for the next 50 years without exhausting the present possibilities but that can only be done if the urge is social improvement and not the profit motive and if the community organizes it for the general good.'

It seems to me that these words of Nehru aptly indicate that Gandhi, who was willing to hail mechanization under proper conditions, was in fact not so much against machines as against the consequences of their application within the framework of a market economy, whose shortcomings were compounded by its backwardness. True, here again a question arises as to how Gandhi could reconcile mechanization, which he recognized in principle, with his urge to do only what he could with his own hands and feet. But this question, which merits special investigation, is comparatively unrelated to the problem of the application of the nonviolent principle.

One of the main reasons why Gandhi, as one who stood for nonviolence, objected to the machine was his contention that the machine is a means of exploitation. This brings us directly to the problem of Gandhi's views on production relations. Gandhi was hardly, if at all, concerned with the history of the development of these relations, for the simple reason that the kind of production relations he

would have liked to introduce were to arise not in the wake of the previous form of such relations but rather in consequence of the attainment to the ethical ideal, which he understood to be an extra-temporal, extra-historical category. But the glaring discrepancy between his ideal and the way things were at his time was only too obvious; and any compromise with what was contrary to his ethical views would, of course, seem to a man like Gandhi out of question. This quality, together with his concern for the needs of the common man and a clear perception of the Indian reality, helped Gandhi become an outstanding critic of the capitalist system of production relations. A fervent proponent of nonviolence, Gandhi could not reconcile himself to the capitalist ownership of the means of production. He wrote: 'Economic equality is the master key to nonviolent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich, in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth, on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved, naked millions, on the other. A nonviolent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists.'[28] More important still, Gandhi understands that continued property inequality is liable to bring about a tremendous social upheaval, in fact an explosion, which, as one who deplores violence, he

naturally considers undesirable. 'A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches, and the power that riches give, and sharing them for the common good.'[29]

In an ideal state, as Gandhi saw it, all ownership of the means of production would be socialized, but the transition to it from capitalist ownership, which was contemporary to him, would be a strictly nonviolent process. For Gandhi, the objective was to reform capitalist ownership and make it fit in with his ethical ideal and, particularly, his idea of trusteeship, whereby the rich man, while retaining possession of his wealth, would take from it for his personal consumption only what he needs within reasonable limits, and in respect of the rest of his estate, would act as a trustee, turning over his riches to meet the needs of society.

In his assessment of the trusteeship idea, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: 'Again I think of the paradox that is Gandhiji.... Is it reasonable to believe in the theory of trusteeship—to give unchecked power and wealth to an individual and to expect him to use it entirely for the public good? Are the best of us so perfect as to be trusted in this way? Even Plato's philosopher-kings would hardly have borne this burden worthily. And is it good for the others to have even these benevolent supermen over them? But there are no supermen or

 philosopher-kings; there are only frail human beings

who cannot help thinking that their own personal good or the advancement of their own ideas is identical with the public good.' Mind you, it is not Gandhi's ideological opponent but his closest associate, a man who shared with him the glory of being one of the founders of Indian independence, who thus remarks on the paradoxical nature of Gandhi's views.

There can be no doubt that it was precisely the nonviolent principle that played a crucial role in shaping Gandhi's views on the problem of production relations. This same principle also determined to a certain extent Gandhi's place in the history of human society. I feel we must agree with Professor Hiren Mukherjee when he says that 'Gandhi's main contribution was not so much in the sphere of bringing about actual and far-reaching social change as in rousing social consciousness about the necessity of such change. He chose this way perhaps because he was supremely preoccupied with the problem of avoiding violence.'

Rene Maheu

May I take my point of departure from a remark of Mr Thapar's which has interested me greatly and which I think is extremely true. Gandhi died, said Mr Thapar, with a feeling of failure, utter irredeemable failure. Well, I think this is true. We have witnesses, Gandhi's companions, who have

said that this is true, and I am afraid we must accept the notion as established. Now this raises a number of questions in my mind. The first question is a psychological, and possibly a romantic, but nevertheless an interesting one. Is it true that all great men died with the feeling that they had failed? Is not failure, in fact, a kind of hallmark of the authenticity of greatness? Is there any great man who, having undertaken a very great task, has died satisfied that he has fulfilled it? I think it is a question that is well worth, if not discussing in public, at least talking over to oneself and thinking about in the innermost recesses of one's heart and mind.

This leads to another and more important question, one which concerns India. What is implied when you say, twenty-five years after Gandhi's death, that he considered he had failed? Does it mean that you have to overhaul, to take another look at, the gandhian vision of India? Does it mean that you have to revise the methods and the tools? Or does it imply, on the contrary, that everything was true, that fundamentally the gandhian vision of India was true, that the methods were essentially right, and that you have merely to start all over again? This, of course, is a perfectly legitimate thing in history. There is no great challenge that you can meet at once, no game you can play through to the end the first time. You can always start again. You are
 always justified in starting again—with other people

and in other conditions. But then do we accept that the premises were right and must not be changed?

My third question is one that concerns the world. What is implied when we say that here was a man who led a very great undertaking which we all admire, who saw it through with impeccable logic, deep practical wisdom and complete dedication—in a word, with all the conditions and requisites of success—and yet who died with a feeling that he had failed? This has a great deal to do with one's notion of the world, the views one has about the world, the views one has about one's own individual situation in the world. All these, I think, are implied.

Dr Drobyshev said in his analysis—an analysis which I find extraordinarily pertinent and which I would personally echo—that Gandhi moved from the ethical to the economic. It is because he was proceeding from the ethical to the economic that nonviolence occupied such an essential place in Gandhi's economic-cum-social action.

This analysis, I think, is valid and personally I would go along with it. But is that not one of the points from which the question of failure may well arise and assume a certain significance? We all, of course, consider that the ethical and the economic are the two terms of a binomial which we would never want to take apart. But what is important is to know whether you proceed from A to B or from B to A. Even though you may say that A and B are

parts of one whole and are indivisible, the question of which direction you take from one to the other is important. Can one envisage a process of development in which the direction is from the ethical to the economic? That is the question.

In what Dr Drobyshev said, there are certain points which deserve our close attention. For instance, the relative indifference of Gandhi so far as growth of production is concerned. How can you reconcile that with any ideal of development? No doubt, Gandhi's criticism of the consumer society is perfectly justified; and if he were alive today, he would certainly criticize it far more sharply than he did in his own time. But how can you reconcile constraints upon production with the overriding need for development? How can you indeed envisage the possibility of an economy founded on the village, on swadeshi, in the context of (say) the failure of the UNCTAD—the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development—which proved once again that the law of the jungle still prevails on the international market? All of us who are interested in the problem of development and who are convinced that Gandhi, if he were alive today, would give primacy to it, must face the question: if one continues to think that the moral-ethical problem is to be tackled from an ethical angle alone, how is it possible to proceed to development?

171 I would like to prod Mr Eteki-Mboumoua into

amplifying one of the sentences of his opening speech the other day, when he referred to a collective autarky of the third world, a kind of swadeshi on a grand scale. Does he mean that the third world could be considered as one enormous international village? Certainly this would strike at the root of things and presumably bring down the present world economy, which we all agree is not working anyway. But is that really a way of facing up to the problem?

My last question is: if you reverse the terms and proceed from the economic to the ethical, where along this particular path do you meet nonviolence?

G. Ramachandran

I want to tell Dr Drobyshev what I know to be the substance of gandhian economics. All big centralized industries, said Gandhi, must be owned by the community; not by the state but by the community, the workers. On the other hand, spread throughout hundreds of thousands of villages in India would be what he called the decentralized industries. At the level of the centralized industries, the producers would naturally own the tools of production. In the decentralized industries, every man of course has his own tools of production in the village. Thus at both ends, Gandhi insisted that the producers must own the tools of production.

In Gandhi's mind, there is no such thing as a divorce between economic development and ethical

development. It is not true that Gandhi begins with ethics and then goes on to economics. Of course, Gandhi had an ethical concept. There is no leader without an ethical concept. Lenin had a superb ethical concept when he refashioned society. But Gandhi said, 'God himself dare not appear today before my people except in the form of food'.[d] He said, 'The existing structure of economic society in India will not last for twenty-four hours if my weapon of satyagraha can be gripped by the people'. It is not as though you begin with ethics and go on to economics; ethics and economics go hand in hand, together, through the entire process. There is no precedence of one over the other. Can economic development be divorced from ethical ideas? Can ethical ideas be divorced from economic development? Gandhi's answer to this is emphatic: they cannot be divorced. If you are convinced that

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d. 'To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages', in the article. 'The Great Sentinel', in *Young India*, 13 October 1921, in answer to Rabindranath Tagore's article, 'The Call of Truth', in *Modern Review*, October 1921. Ten years later Gandhi wrote: 'How am I to talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day. To them God can only appear as bread and butter.' (*Young India*, 15 October 1931).

nonviolence is the centre of his ethics, then everything falls into place.

Arne Naess

The relationship between self-respect and the economic policies of Gandhi is a very intimate one. I would like to quote a sentence from Martin Luther King: 'With the spirit straining towards true self-esteem, the Negro must boldly throw off the manacles of self-abnegation and say to himself and the world, "I am somebody; I am a person; I am a man with dignity and honour".' But how can the Negro honestly say this if he feels he is nobody? Very early on, Gandhi had to face this problem of how to help create a minimum of self-respect among the poor people of India. His program of khadi and the spinning wheel I see very much in the light of an effort to make the poorest in India acquire self-respect. Through the khadi movement they learnt to respect themselves, and this made it possible for them to stand up and fight. It is my feeling that in the United States, it was very difficult for Martin Luther King and others to introduce something analogous to the khadi movement in the economic realm, which is an imperative for the achievement of self-esteem in our world. The problem of violence in the United States today has perhaps a great deal to do with this question of self-respect. Lack of self-respect creates the feeling of being

personally humiliated. When Gandhi was asked whether one would be justified in hitting back when insulted, he answered: 'If you feel humiliated and hurt you will be justified in slapping the bully in the face or taking whatever action you think necessary to vindicate your self-respect. But if you have assimilated the nonviolent spirit there should be no feeling of humiliation in you.' Here Gandhi connects the question of self-respect with that of violence. I think most of the Negro leaders in the United States will have to go through this question of how to create economic conditions for self-respect, a question that it was possible for Gandhi to solve to a certain extent in India.

Radivoj Uvalic

In order to understand the real sense of the basic principles of Gandhi and his mission, we must come back to his conception of nonviolence in practice, as he applied it in India. First, I feel that Gandhi places considerable trust in man and in his ability to act efficiently with a view to achieving positive social change. He feels that this can be achieved through effective action by man. Although profoundly religious, his religiousness was not of a conservative nature. His religious approach was utilitarian and adapted to the main goal of his mission, namely, the transformation of man and society. The renunciation of all material enjoyment,

asceticism, vegetarianism, simplicity and humility, which were the principles of his life, can be considered less as a means of obtaining divine grace and more as a means of influencing others, so that they should contribute to achieving the main goal on earth, the liberation of man. Gandhi was against all dogma, even religious dogma, and he subjected religious doctrines to reasonable analysis. Therefore, orthodox representatives of Hinduism considered him a traitor and were not prepared to accept his tolerance of other religions. This also, as we know, was the motive behind his murder. Gandhi's propagation of religion was not just a slogan; it was a way of life. Renunciation of what was superfluous was an important weapon in Gandhi's struggle. By superfluous we must understand everything that does not contribute to achieving the main goal of struggling for truth and the liberation of man and society.

The question then arises: did Gandhi preach only physical nonviolence? Some authors feel that Gandhi also had in mind spiritual nonviolence. How can one admit this interpretation if it is considered as a negation of the struggle against evil, to which Gandhi was so attached? Elimination of violence in the social context implies mental and spiritual changes in man, who in his motivations must free himself from everything that involves physical force and violence. Such motivations are based on spiritual intolerance in the field of race, nation,

caste or other social groups. It is difficult, therefore, to reconcile such an interpretation with the dynamic conception of social progress which was Gandhi's.

To Gandhi society was an entity in conflict. The process of transformation, leading to a better apprehension of truth through continuous search, had in his mind to be reached through a modification of man's personality, by eliminating inherited errors and engendering a better understanding of the interests and needs of the community and society. But that process could not be expected to develop automatically. We who understand this need, must we place ourselves at the service of the process or should we let it develop as needed? In fact, Gandhi was in favour of a general and consistent action which would serve as an example to others. One should not give oneself up to fatalism. One should not recognize inequalities, socially speaking. One should do away with the exploitation of man by man, racial discrimination and religious intolerance by modifying the existing situation, but pressure may only be brought to bear by example, by faith and by loyalty to truth. One cannot give any other interpretation to passive non-resistance, such as hunger strikes, boycott of imported goods, and so on.

One must not resign oneself to evil and injustice, whatever happens. That is one of the premises of Gandhi's doctrine. Resigning oneself to evil for
 whatever reason involves moral and spiritual death.

This shows that Gandhi was in favour of a struggle, but every struggle involves or implies the use of the proper weapons, weapons strong enough to achieve the desired goals. It is necessary to manifest strength through nonviolence, by acting on and influencing others by means other than physical force. The difference between physical pressure and spiritual pressure is very great. One submits to physical pressure because of fear, but to subject oneself to spiritual pressure involves a rational process, a process of discerning the various consequences and an understanding of one's own action. That is the process of re-education of the social man to which Gandhi aspires. It is the permanent search for truth as the ultimate aim of life. The struggle against evil and injustice and against exploitation and tyranny is indispensable, but the means must be pure and moral.

The question then arises: by what means can one convince the adversary? According to Gandhi, no man has the right to impose anything on another man by physical force. All questions linked with life require the dialogue which leads to truth. It is the road which brings us closer to what finally becomes acceptable to all mankind. The conception that Gandhi had of man's role in life and his struggle for progress and freedom was so new, so sui generis and so contrary to the usually accepted notions that it met with a certain amount of misunderstanding. It was profoundly revolutionary and required, from

those who struggled along the lines advocated by Gandhi, tremendous devotion, perseverance, courage and moral strength. Only a consistently persevering man like Gandhi could have endured such a difficult struggle and overcome the numerous obstacles that blocked the narrow road of his political struggle. More than once, he found himself in a minority, even isolated, pressed on all sides by the opposition of his immediate associates and other partisans. For a modest man like Gandhi, it was not just obstinate pride or rejection of the views of others. It was his absolute faith in the rightness of his views, his determination to prove that his views were right and his determination to overcome serious difficulties. Of his followers, he demanded great sacrifices and constant devotion to the cause. Therefore, it is not surprising that he was much criticized and in the end he sacrificed his life with a view to achieving the aim of his life.

To search continuously for truth, to be a devoted servant of the victory of truth was the only guiding principle of Gandhi's action. That he was nevertheless able to obtain the trust of a whole nation, mobilize in the struggle the latent force of millions of the poor and the miserable of his country and force the all-powerful British Empire to capitulate, can only be explained by his profound knowledge of the environment in which he acted and of the precious moral values which were treasured in the population of his country by

centuries of history. He acted through his own example. His simplicity, his humility, his identification with the way of life of the most humble of the population, his absolute courage (attested to by the fact that he was always exposed to numerous dangers) his physical effort, his frequent hunger strikes and his readiness to sacrifice his own life in order to achieve the goals of his action—all these resulted in his obtaining the trust of millions of men.

This approach, which was understandable to the immense majority of the population, aroused the popular masses who appeared to be inert, and Gandhi very soon acquired their complete trust and their love. The strength of these millions of men, acting without violence and through non-cooperation, disconcerted and demoralized the foe. As this force manifested itself, it was soon seen to be invincible. No manual of military strategy or tactics foresaw any solution for facing such a situation. This profound wisdom, as adapted to the specific conditions of a given social environment, is expressed in a few formulae, accessible to even the simplest of men. These are the service of truth, freedom from fear, nonviolence, non-cooperation, and the solidarity and equality of all men of whatever race, caste or religion.

Gandhi's nonconformism, his conviction that India had to find her own way of struggling for freedom and equality, was of paramount importance. A

comparison between the liberation struggle of the people of India and analogous movements in other countries would show that the way selected by Gandhi was the one best adapted to the environment of his country—less vulnerable, more effective and quicker, and perhaps the only possible way at the time, taking into account the relationship of forces and the circumstances then prevailing.

Gandhi, we feel, did not elaborate a doctrine which could be universally applied. His approach can only be understood within the framework of the social reality of India. But that does not mean that the basic premises of his conception were not for Gandhi of universal value. The nonviolent struggle, he felt, had to go beyond the frontiers of India. In his view, nonviolence should be the only weapon of struggle, both at the national and international levels. Under the historical circumstances of the time, however, his method of struggle was particularly important for India. His personality and his devotion to the struggle made the principle of nonviolence into a moving force. The presence and activity of Gandhi thus became the decisive criteria for success.

India, moreover, was fertile soil for such a struggle. The moral foundations of Gandhi's teaching are compounded of a number of cultural ingredients built up over many centuries in India. Gandhi's political force comes from his profound knowledge of the man in the street, of his

convictions, his beliefs and his ability to understand, in his own way, the political objectives as they were exposed to him.

Lanza del Vasto

I cannot allow this question of the relationship between the ethical and the economic to go unanswered, because I consider it a fundamental issue. First of all, it was said that we do not wish to separate the two elements in this binomial. Then it was asked whether, starting from the ethical, it would be possible to proceed to an economic state of affairs which would be both operational, desirable and satisfactory. This is a question which looms larger than mere economic principles and which really has to do with many other principles and, in particular, the problem of truth. How, may I ask, can you start from the outer circle and reach the inner circle? When you start from an economic approach, when you consider the economic situation to be valid in itself, where will you meet the ethical? If the problem is put in these terms, the answer is, Never—and it is not I who am providing the answer, but the facts of history.

What in fact is the result of our economy of world development? What is the outcome of the world effects as we find it today? Ninety per cent of the raw commodities are in fact being channelled to America and Europe. What remains by way of

commodities and raw materials for the rest of the world? This is the kind of development you get when you pursue development, without any concern for ethics or justice, as an end in itself and under the inept superstition that the more junk you produce, or the more commodities you produce, and the more you send these to the remotest corners of the earth, the better it would be for everybody. What does the prosperity that rich countries allegedly enjoy look like? I would say, it is like a pump, something that drains goods. And what becomes of freedom? It gives way to a kind of impersonal constraint, a tyranny without tyrants in flesh and blood. It is a tyranny far more difficult to resist than any yoke that may have been imposed in the past by one man on other men, in that you can always have access to a man, but you cannot establish any form of dialogue with a system. So what do we have? We have the two capitalist systems—the so-called private capitalist system, which is in fact not private but composed of societies, groups and holdings; and state capitalism which uses exactly the same methods as the other and where the humblest of the humble are always meted out the same kind of treatment. What becomes of peace? It is left to be founded on the bomb!

All this, as a matter of fact, really harps back to the concept of truth which we have been
 describing—though in a way that is radically

different from the way in which Gandhi conceived of it—as that which we do not, and never will, possess. This inaccessible truth, this objective external truth, one may of course describe as completely intangible and unreachable and one which the most advanced forms of science can only see partially. The notion of trying to see the totality of truth is a process similar to the one that we would encounter if we try to reach the infinite by counting the numbers one after the other. So we cannot, I think, really grasp the notion of a complete and exhaustive understanding of the world on which to ground our action, because it cannot be achieved.

However, while the external and objective and, shall we say, absolute truth is inaccessible, the internal truth, the religious, aesthetic or ethical truth is inescapable, because that is what makes us live and move and be. It is something that we have in us, and of which we are a parcel and a fragment. We hold a fragment of this truth in us and it is from within ourselves that we draw inspiration for our action. It is from this fragment of truth that Gandhi shaped his conduct, both personal and social.

In the final analysis, we must know that truth is one. We must, I feel, be rid of this hateful western habit of constantly opposing concepts, in terms of internal and external, social and private. To reach unity, one must start from inward unity.

Paul Power

I would like to turn very briefly to Gandhi's ideas about civil disobedience. This topic is relevant to at least four of the items listed in our Working Document—political liberation of India, economic liberation, social non-discrimination and religious tolerance. I would prefer to use the term civil disobedience, with the understanding that there are other possible ways of discussing this topic. I suppose civil disobedience could be called a shorthand term. It is interesting that Gandhi gave credit for this term to Henry David Thoreau, the New England practitioner of resistance. As we know, when Gandhi was in South Africa, he was searching for a term that would adequately take into account not only the political methods involved but the values behind them. Of course Gandhi used the term 'passive resistance' for a while but then went on to adopt a larger and more inclusive term, 'satyagraha'.

Contrary to some interpretations, Thoreau was not a believer in nonviolence in the gandhian sense. After writing his famous essay on civil disobedience, Thoreau later supported the cause of John Brown who wished to liberate the slaves through political violence. It is also now more or less agreed that Gandhi read Thoreau's essay after he had launched his first civil disobedience in 1906, so that in a sense

 Thoreau was a confirming or supporting sort of

influence. Nevertheless, Thoreau apparently is the originator of the term 'civil disobedience', which Gandhi also occasionally used.

To return to the matter of satyagraha and civil disobedience, it would seem that civil disobedience is one branch on the tree of satyagraha, and not the highest branch. There are other higher limbs: in particular, social reconstruction and also negotiations in good faith with the opponent to try to find a basis for mutual agreement. But eventually, of course, civil disobedience comes into the picture when the negotiations have proved unsuccessful. I would point out that in the origin of Gandhi's civil disobedience in South Africa, this type of political action followed the use of constitutional means. We all know how partial and inadequate these means were in the Victorian situation of British imperialism. But there is no doubt that Gandhi tried very hard to use the petition; he drafted many of these and, of course, he took trips to London to try to work out some solution to the grievances of the South African Indian community. But when he found these to be inadequate, he turned to civil disobedience.

One point in the South African context I would mention in passing, namely, Gandhi's conception of who should be included in the civil disobedience movement. It seems apparent from research on this period that Gandhi wanted to limit civil disobedience to the Indian community. He did not

intend to extend it to the other non-European, that is to say, black African communities. In a recent biography, Geoffrey Ashe has criticized Gandhi for not extending civil disobedience to include Africans as well as the Indian community. I have no answer to this problem except to fall back on the explanation that Gandhi was serving an apprenticeship, so that he stayed within the small circle of his own community and did not take up the grievances of Africans and others in the non-European population, which of course was, and is, the overwhelming population of South Africa.

There are three or four key requirements to the gandhian theory and practice of civil disobedience. The first is that right is earned, not presumed or seized. This earning of right or earning of merit has roots in Gandhi's philosophical and metaphysical assumptions. But you do have a contrast here with conditions today, with respect to resistance to governments. Now the claim is made that there is a right to resistance and it does not have to be earned in the gandhian sense. A second important requirement that Gandhi laid down, as I understand it, is that suffering is a primary test of earning merit, such suffering of course taking place in several ways. A third key requirement seems to be that ahimsa is to be used as a norm and not as a mere technique. Certainly in my country, you have numerous things written about gandhian disobedience, where nonviolence is said to be a

method or a technique, instead of being a whole philosophy of life. Nonviolence is not a mere technique or a simple method which can be adopted by anybody; it is grounded on serious assumptions.

A fourth major requirement of gandhian civil disobedience, as I understand it, is willing submission to the consequences of one's rule-breaking. Gandhi, as we know, submitted to jail sentences again and again. He was convinced that the person who commits civil disobedience must suffer the legal consequences, whatever they may be. There is an interesting episode from Gandhi's South African career, which relates how he and his colleagues were once arrested and he was given a lighter prison sentence than his friends. Whereupon he protested to the judge, who however persisted in giving him the lighter sentence. The story points out Gandhi's demand for equal treatment in the matter of punishment.

A fifth requirement is that the individual who commits civil disobedience should not take advantage of the temporary embarrassment of his opponent. I do not know how crucial this is as a criterion for gandhian civil disobedience, but it does seem to be part of the package. It has been pointed out that Gandhi broke his own criterion when in 1942 he launched the Quit India movement, at a time when the British Empire was in the midst of a great war. If we say that that is true, we can

 perhaps fall back on the thought that the principle

is still valid, even if the master himself found reasons for not always being consistent with it.

A final question: who decides when civil disobedience must take place? My reading of Gandhi's career is that he was an elitist on this question and that he kept to himself the first authority to decide when civil disobedience is permissible. In addition to this elitist understanding about who gives the first signal, is the matter of followership. This is made clear in some of the recent volumes of the *Collected Works*. Gandhi said, 'Those who follow me must do so based on their own convictions, on their own conscience'. You have a duality here—elitism on the one hand, in terms of the actual signal for civil disobedience, but on the other hand, those who follow must do so willingly when the call comes. Gandhi's version of civil disobedience is thus a combination of the leadership of the inspired person, who sees the right moment and the right circumstances, and the followership of others who join the leader not because of his charisma or out of fashion, but because they are independently convinced.

Jeanne Hersch

I think it is perfectly true that, fundamentally, in Gandhi's thought there is something which stands in the way of the evolution known as division of labour. But I think this may be accounted for not

only in terms of the deep-set doctrine itself but indeed by the context. In Gandhi it is extremely difficult to establish a distinction between what has been the product of local influence and what came from the depths, because he was deeply rooted in the local conditions, and the local conditions went so deep that it is almost impossible to distinguish between the two.

We must not forget that Gandhi lived in an overpopulated country, where the first overriding necessity was to give work to everybody. Economists are agreed that the problem is different in overpopulated and underpopulated countries, that in overpopulated countries there is no call to introduce heavy industry because heavy industry is not manpower-intensive. The notion of the spinning wheel is therefore both a symbol of the freely consented autarky of the individual, swadeshi, and possibly also an instinctive response to a given economic situation in a given country.

On the question of the relationship between development and ethics, I think the notion of development, as we understand it today, is founded on a valuation which practically leaves out the ethical. We do have a marginal opposition, where the industrial civilization is called into question, but it is only marginal. In practice, everybody still behaves as if the valuation of industrial development for its own sake is unavoidable, whether or not it is a good thing in itself. This, I think, is a radical

contradiction of Gandhi's thought, and it seems to me impossible to strike any kind of compromise here.

I am not at all sure that Gandhi, if he were alive today, would necessarily abide by the spindle and the handloom. Even in his own time, he did not quite stick to the notion of the handloom. But there are, to be sure, certain limitations in the ethics-versus-development dialectics. Gandhi would certainly be in favour of everything that would overcome hunger and break the fetters of human beings, because when certain basic requirements are not met they prevent man from being free and they compel people to have a representation of God to themselves, which is one of, as Gandhi once said, bread and butter. But beyond the satisfaction of this basic requirement, the infinite multiplication of goods and industrialization are a completely anti-gandhian notion. This I think is extremely clear, and should be underlined.

Then there is this notion of Gandhi's failure. I think Mr Thapar said that Gandhi died with the feeling that he had failed; and to this Mr Maheu added that no great man ever died with the feeling that he had attained his objectives. But Gandhi very seldom chose words which would mean that his thoughts embraced a totality. Thus when you say 'entirely failed', I am worried about the word 'entirely'. I am sure that Gandhi would never accept

 the notion that he failed entirely. What would

'success' mean in Gandhi's estimation? To succeed, he would have thought, would be to remove man from the human condition, give a final turn to history, destroy the movement between success and failure which is the hallmark of the human condition. In other words, there is a kind of failure in Gandhi, as in every great human undertaking; but to speak of a 'total failure' has no gandhian meaning.

G. Ramachandran

We have talked about civil disobedience. But during the years that Gandhi lived in India, there was another expression which was as vital, as central and as crucial as civil disobedience, and which he repeated day after day—namely, constructive work. It is said that civil disobedience and constructive work are two sides of the same coin. There could be no effective civil disobedience, no effective marshalling of millions of people, without constructive work. Similarly, constructive work must lead up to civil disobedience on behalf of freedom. The constructive program was a mighty thing in Gandhi's time. No leader worth the name, including Nehru, was outside it.

What was the constructive program? Gandhi took the men in high stations of life and said to them: 'Turn your face to the millions of India. Put your

 hands to such tasks as will unite them, give them a

sense of confidence and bring them up into the arena of nonviolent battle.' You will be surprised that Gandhi said more than once: 'My constructive program is the training ground of the satyagrahi'. All of us who lived with him had to go into the constructive program. It meant the unification of India, self-reliance for the dispossessed, and a measure of organized common life in which we marched together, without caste and untouchability. How he forged us into the unity of the fighting forces of civil disobedience is a secret which will never be understood unless you study the constructive program of Gandhi.

Professor Hersch ably contested the notion that Gandhi had died saying that he had entirely failed. I do not know if Mr Thapar meant all that he said. Take Nehru. The keystone of his foreign policy was friendship with China. That friendship crumbled into ashes and dust before he died. Does that mean the failure of his foreign policy? At the point of communal unity between Muslims and Hindus, Gandhi admitted failure. But while admitting his failure, day and night he put his shoulders to the wheel to rebuild that unity. He built it in such a manner that nothing in the world can make the Hindu and the Muslim permanent enemies any more in this world. Every time there is a quarrel between the Hindu and the Muslim, the memory of this gentle figure walking with his bamboo stick in Noakhali will come to their mind—the solitary

pilgrim, as we called him in India.

This word failure and this word success—how do we understand failure? Mr Maheu said that all great men fail. To that I would add the corollary, that no great man ever failed. You may lose a battle, but you do not lose the war. Gandhi occasionally lost a battle, as every general in history has lost a battle. Some battle is always lost, but the war is not lost. Gandhi's war is not lost and must not be allowed to be lost.

Anibal del Campo

When one analyses nonviolence, one tends to forget that there are certain intermediary terms that one should not ignore. These are an integral part of the whole notion of ahimsa and satyagraha. In particular, the notion of sacrifice, the notion of suffering and the notion of courage. Gandhi said that fear was the atheism of the heart. He said this because he was aware of the fact that a soul full of fear was a soul without faith, a soul that has no roots, in the deeper sense of the word. But at the same time this notion was also a part of those elements which are indissolubly and ontologically linked together.

Another vital element in the dimension of Gandhi's world was poverty. He did not have in mind the misery and wretchedness which degrades man and compels him to do servile work to save his own life.

What he had in mind was deliberate poverty, renunciation of everything that is unnecessary. The appropriation of what is not necessary was looked upon by him as robbery. He insisted on this intentional poverty because it expressed his deepest convictions. He believed that the fate of man depended on the cultivation of such poverty. The idea obviously had considerable influence on his economic thinking. An economy based on the desire to satisfy the ever-increasing requirements of modern civilization is not in the line of Gandhi's thought. That was not the type of economy he had in mind. What he wanted was an economy cut to man's measure.

Economics, according to Gandhi, did not constitute an autonomous process which just unfolded and developed on its own; rather, it was a product of man's activity and his free will. Between man and economics there are numerous intermediaries. Economics, in actual fact, is what makes it possible for our physical body to develop. It is the combination of elements which makes our life possible. What Gandhi did not want was this gigantic economic structure which produced far more than was necessary to satisfy the basic needs of man. And he saw deeper. He asked himself why man, having at his disposal economic and other kinds of tools, was still unable to eliminate poverty, wretchedness, misery and hunger from the world. That was for him a crime of omission.

Does one liberate man through economics or does one liberate economics by first liberating man? For Gandhi the liberation of man is the aspect on which stress must first be laid. He advocated the transformation of man because he did not believe in what an eminent author, Martin Buber, has called a moratorium on ethics, as an effective means to achieve a revolutionary change in the social condition. Indeed when we intend to change economic and social life abruptly, we are told that for the time being we must not give heed to ethical values, because we are immersed in a revolutionary process. But, precisely, this was for Gandhi an untrue position.

Another great apostle of nonviolence, a South American, Reverend Helde Camara, in an interview that he gave in Paris a few years ago, said: 'To arrive at the revolution of man we must first promote a new kind of cultural revolution. For if the people's mentality does not change in depth, the reform of structures, the reform of the basis will remain a dead letter. I address myself particularly to the younger generations of the under-developed countries. I ask them: why go for power when you still have not developed the methods of applying this power to your countries? Up to now you have been taught the methods which are valid for the developed countries. But in your countries, it is moral pressure that you have to exercise. Try and prepare yourself for the responsibilities that will be

yours in a few years. You know fully well that material and physical under-development results in moral and spiritual under-development. Remain in your countries and teach your people the principles of nonviolence which are so basic to any new strategy of world development.' And he added: 'Only men who achieve inner unity, only men who have the universal element in their selves, only these will be able to be the real revolutionaries of nonviolence.'

Gandhi advocated the complete transformation of men; and for this transformation, one of his important tools was education. He aimed at the re-education of character, and he sought to achieve this by giving them an ashramic or collective education. This last is one of the most important elements in Indian culture for the training of personality. Gandhi felt that by training the personality of men one would achieve a true revolution, since all revolutions are based on a transformation of education. That is why for Gandhi it was the very core of the problem. The two elements which formed its base—truth and nonviolence—always went together. It is only in their perspective that Gandhi saw the liberation of India. The liberation of India was not based on material values or on historical co-existence, but on a moral and religious vocation which goes back to the Upanishads and the Veda. What is most important was education, because only education

could get the upper hand over materialism, to which the people of India were exposed.

Gandhi had never said that he formulated any principles which could not be changed. All that he said was that, as far as he was concerned, they could not be changed, but that others could perhaps reinterpret them in other ways. His thought was entirely anti-dogmatic. Indeed throughout his life, he carried out a number of experiments with himself. But whatever he did, he did not necessarily impose on others, although he was very strict with himself. He did not forget what the Buddha had said. Speaking to his disciples, the Buddha had asked: 'Would you then, mendicants, thus knowing, thus seeing, say this: "Esteemed is our teacher, and out of esteem for the teacher we say thus"?' 'Not so, revered sir', answered the disciples. 'What you say, mendicants', continued asking the Buddha, 'is not what you yourself know, yourselves perceive, yourselves have comprehended?' 'It is so, revered sir', answered the mendicants. Gandhi was very close to that approach and could have said like the Buddha: 'Accept not what you hear by report, accept not tradition, do not hastily conclude that "it must be so". Do not accept a statement on the ground that it is found in our books, nor on the supposition that "this is acceptable", nor because it is the saying of your teacher.'

Another element in the educational concept of
 Gandhi was manual work. He had great regard for

what could be achieved with men's hands and feet. Indeed he used to say, 'There is no point in developing the brain only. One has to develop one's brain through one's hands. If I were a poet. I would write a beautiful poem on the possibilities of the five fingers of one's hand. Those who do not know how to use their hands get little profit out of education. They are like one who sings false notes without feeling the music. Books are never sufficiently interesting to hold the interest of the mind. The mind begins to wander. Only manual work brings you back to reality.' Rabindranath Tagore had also taken up this problem. Kaka Kalelkar once said: 'One must learn to eliminate those social standards which symbolize exploitation ' Today one tends to say that a person is cultured if he does not use his hands. It is necessary to correct this concept of culture and spirituality and recognize and embellish the moral and spiritual qualities of the different occupations of the working classes. And that was for Gandhi completely right. Tagore, himself a poet, spoke highly of the nobility and dignity of the humble tasks of those who worked in his university. One can say the same of education in the Indian ashrams, the community education which establishes such intimate links between persons of one community. In the kibbutzim in Israel you have community life which measures the life of man through as a function of work. But before the kibbutzim, much of this was known in India long

ago.

In the same sense, Aryanayakam has said: 'In one sense the definition of the ashram transcends every other definition. It is not a system of education.' He says: 'It is at once a way of life and a living community. The ashram is based on the recognition of the basic truth that education is not only a preparation for life but it is life itself. That is why education can be given and received through the participation of all in a community which voluntarily accepts a discipline, the aim of which is clear.' Kalelkar also says: 'An ashram is not an educational centre. It is a retreat, a home; it is a sort of community shelter for people who have a common vision of a purer, nobler and richer life.' And he adds: 'An ashram is not necessarily a centre of renunciation, an exile from life. This type of ashram often hides the defeat and frustration of those who seek refuge in it. Though tolerated in India, it has never inspired her authentic humanity. The genuine ashrams are centres of hope, struggle and repose—hope of a better life, struggle for the victory of the spiritual forces over the non-spiritual forces, and repose based on the harmonious integration of the legitimate requirements of life and in which conflicting ideas can find a terrain for reconciliation. The ashram, in fact, is a society in miniature. If we elaborate an ideal life in a suitable and ideal environment it will be possible to assemble creative energy, and the energy thus assembled will

be able to produce a broader and better society. The ashram is a place where one attempts to carry out great and noble human experiments.' These in main are the basic traits of Gandhi's notion of education, what he called Basic education.

Much has been said here about the distinction between ethics and politics, and between economics and politics, and about the difference between the ethical man, the economic man and the political man. But never had Gandhi countenanced any such distinction. He had said, 'Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means'.[30] He felt that all these things were closely and intimately linked. Therefore, it is possible to assert Gandhi's importance at a time like ours, when everybody speaks of demystification, demythologization, desacralization, secularization, etc.; when these ideal elements are being thrown out, on the ground that they are not practically useful; and when we mutilate everything that raises us up. As the German thinker, Eduard Spranger, has put it: 'There are two concepts of man which are at the base of two different kinds of education. One conceives man as a mere point of intersection, a scene where there are interacting cultural influences, alien opinions, processes and determinations; the other as a centre of ethical decision, of inner spiritual responsibilities and forces.' Gandhi's ideas belong to the latter: his teaching ennobled us and took us up to the heights, in the search for another

level of life and action.

Ravan Farhadi

The question of principles and their application brings us into direct confrontation with the choice between dualism and unity. A thousand years ago in India, Sankaracharya, a young thinker, had studied, not in a cosmogonic sense but from the moral and spiritual points of view, this question of dvaita, dualism, as against advaita, the absence of dualism. We know how dear this concept of advaita was to Gandhi's heart. For the individual, for society, this is an important notion and, according to Gandhi, advaita has the upper hand. He has said that he believes in the essential unity of man and of everything that lives. If one individual takes a step forward in spiritual life all humanity stands to gain thereby. Contrariwise, the regression of a single individual makes the whole world take a step backward. Any moral or spiritual error brings consequences not only to the individual committing the transgression but for society as a whole. In other words, no separation is possible between the moral behaviour of the individual and the political life of society; nor between an individual's private life and his life as a social being.

Take the problem of secularism. For a modern state, a 'democratic' country, what does secularism
 mean? Respect for other religions and especially the

separation of church and state; in other words, having believers of different faiths live side by side, a desacralization of public precincts and activities. But this is not what secularism meant for Gandhi. For him it was not only a matter of respecting other religions but more so the diffusion of the spiritual influences of religion, of all religions, upon society as a whole. In his secularism, Gandhi has no place for the distinction, already classic in the West, between church and state, between religion and politics. He refuses to make this distinction, both in his individual and in his corporate life. We cannot but admire the strength of Gandhi's personality in thus categorically refusing to accept one of the great achievements of bourgeois thinking in Europe and rejecting what is an axiom for the overwhelming majority of modern intellectuals.

Now we should not simply believe that Gandhi refused only to wear the European coat. He did much more. He refused to carry in his thinking the notions which were widely accepted by western intellectuals. He rejected what seemed to be completely normal at the turn of the century, the positivism of Comte. He rejected scientific socialism, which was already an important philosophical discipline in the West. And he makes an expurgated version of his own religion, by choosing from it what is truly basic, what is truly of importance to humanity, and rejecting traditions which according to him are not in keeping with the

path of justice. Therefore also he turns to other religions. He reads the Bible, the Quran, and Tolstoy. Therefore, I think it would be an error to separate ethics from economics, or to nave one precede the other, because Gandhi lived in advaita and believed in advaita.

It has been asked, what would Gandhi have done if he had lived under a Fascist regime which recognized no moral or legal restraints. Those who do not believe in Gandhi's sincerity, such as some socialists, cynically argue that, being so intelligent and crafty, he would then have invented another way of thinking, another system, another mode of action. Among left-wing socialists, Gandhi is regarded as an agent of capitalism, someone who has invented an ascetic system to facilitate the exploitation of those who are exploited by the capitalists. Open any encyclopaedia published in the early fifties in a socialist country and look up the article on Gandhi. Read the extreme left-wing literature even in India to see how Gandhi is judged.

Was Gandhi a politician who used his philosophy for his political ends? I would say, No. One of our great western minds, the late Massignon, who being a believer in Judaeo-Christian tenets was as well a convinced gandhian, told me when I was a student: 'One thing makes me believe in the sincerity of Gandhi: it is the martyrdom to which his life led.'

G. Ramachandran

Mr Farhadi referred to a communist country which, a few years ago, had characterized Gandhi as a kind of bourgeois agent of capitalism and so on. I am quite sure he knows that that country has since undergone a profound conversion of mind in regard to Gandhi and it is only fair to add this to the old picture.

Saul Karsz

To my mind, nonviolence corresponds to an ethical doctrine which, basically and essentially, is a political attitude. Any definition of Gandhi's ideas should be preceded by a definition of this political attitude. Gandhi is not the sole example of an ethical reformer in India; his teaching of nonviolence was far from being original. Nor is he the only one who was so taken up with his ideas that he would have even died for them. Gandhi's specific contribution and originality should be sought not only in his ethics but also, and above all, at the level of the realization of that very ethics: that is to say, at a political level.

The gandhian quest for truth, for example, implies an ethical conception. I would neither deny nor under-estimate it, but I should like to point out that *every ethical conception remits to a political stand.* It is not possible to understand an ethics, and even

less the difference between two ethics, without understanding first the political stand that enunciates itself abstractly by means of a given ethics.

Every ethics preaches goodness, truth, model behaviour, etc. Sometimes these very values imply the death of hundreds of human beings (for instance, the Spanish Inquisition, Stalinism, etc). According to the ideology of those who kill, the victims find in death their salvation and hence the realization of the good, the truth, etc. Of course, today one does not agree with this kind of ethics. But is the disagreement only and exclusively dependent on another ethics we oppose to it *or* is it answerable to the material realization of each ethics, that is to say, to the political reality of every ethics?

Gandhi's originality resides in the explicitly political nature of his ethical conception. To state it more clearly, *ethics is a discourse shaped by a table of values, and the fulfilment of it, in a given society, is a political realization.* Dr Lanza del Vasto told us that there are two types of nonviolence, one that is active and one that is passive. I believe Gandhi's nonviolence was an efficient political strategy for empirically transforming the Indian social reality in one of the stages of its anti-colonialist struggle. This is the point which I should like to dwell upon. Passive nonviolence consists in the acceptance of 'destiny', the acceptance of the fact that man is born and dies according to criteria he does not guide or select or has control over, that he has a providence

chosen by his Good. This social and individual indifference, the roots of which are religious fatalism and political conformism; this way of being subjected to an economic and social order without knowing its laws and without attempting to penetrate and modify the mechanism of its functionings, belongs, I believe, to 'passive' nonviolence. But Gandhi's nonviolence is completely foreign to such ethical indifference and collaboration with colonialist exploitation. Gandhi's nonviolence is 'active'. It is a concrete activity.

I believe that there is no sense in talking in the abstract about violence and nonviolence. It is necessary to place them in space and time.

Gandhi's nonviolence cannot be opposed to violence unless it is considered in a determined context. Gandhi's nonviolence is opposed to what I would call non-commitment. It is opposed to non-participation, in an active and *militant* manner, in social events. It is opposed to the idea (which I believe Gandhi would have considered false) that looks upon ethical conceptions as purely intimate and personal in nature, and whose empirical fulfilment does not consequently contribute in any way to their value and significance. Of course, anyone may believe that he can choose. But even if there exists some way or the other, more or less individualized, to realize an ethics, its effective basis and its realization are social and political.

 Mention was also made of an inseparable link

between economics and ethics. It was said that this was the normal standard sought by Gandhi. Others have said that in capitalist countries these two elements were separate. May I say that perhaps the question is badly stated. In every society the economic system is related to a definite ethical system. No society separates ethics from economics and vice versa. They cannot be separated for the simple reason that there does not exist an economy in general or an ethics in general. There are particular economic systems related to particular ethical systems. No social formation separates, by means of eternal notions, the mode in which it produces and distributes material goods from the ethical systems which justify that mode of production and distribution.

There is even a capitalist set of ethics. Therefore, it is not once again at this level that we should discover Gandhi's teaching and thinking. In all humility, I would say that it is not at this level that we should seek to find a qualitative difference between the gandhian axioms and the axioms of any other system. Economics and ethics are inseparably intertwined in every society. It is like not forgetting to breathe when you walk: it is a definite situation and not a theoretical problem. I feel that in Gandhi we should not look at things from the point of view of an abstract union between ethics with a capital 'E' and economics with a capital 'E'. Things should be looked at in a different way.

We know that Gandhi promoted the spinning wheel and artisan industries. This was one way of marshalling the strength of the nation, leading to a situation where Indians, who were immersed in millennial religious traditions (fatalism, non-commitment) might through spinning and weaving and artisan work, find a way out. The emphasis laid on the spinning wheel and the artisan techniques should be understood as an attempt at the recovery of Indian traditions and specificity against the ruling colonialism. The spinning wheel enabled each worker to experience that he *can* change the order of things, make what he needs, or exchange it for the products he wants. The emphasis on the spinning wheel and the artisan industries derived from and produced a policy of anti-resignation and anti-indifference.

Gandhi did not reject machines as such, nor did he reject the industrial society as such. Moreover, the spinning wheel is a machine, and it belongs to a given stage of the technical development of a society. Gandhi's fight was not directed against machines as such, but against the effects of certain machines within a given historical configuration. He rejected a given state of things at a given historical moment, the use of machines in a given situation. The machine, after all, is not a thing either for or against man. Those who are for or against the machine are not the same. Gandhi was against a

 certain use or application of the machine which

characterized a certain period of capitalism.

It has been said that nonviolence was (exclusively) an ethical attitude at a given stage in the history of a society. It was a much more striking and resonant thing than that. I would venture to say that in the way India was colonized, most of the public services on which the existence of the colonized as well as the colonizers depended were in the hands of the Indians. If they refused to work, it meant a complete paralysis of the whole country, equivalent to a general strike. The 'Salt March', for example, manifests an ethical conception of non-resignation to hunger. Its realization takes the shape of a popular shift, a popular movement, an abandonment of everyday work, a march throughout the country towards the salt works, a questioning of the private-property monopoly of salt production, a perturbation of the running economic system. Briefly, that ethical conception finds its realization politically. Such, to my mind, is the originality of Gandhi's message. Hence its popular impact in India and our present interest in him.

Gandhi's universality is a concrete universality, an Indian universality, a universality placed in space and time. If we look for it everywhere and in every society, if we want to export it a-critically in every direction, we will be forced to abandon the whole of its concrete elements. Then Gandhi will become for us an empty universality, capable of enunciating principles which are so general and

abstract that finally we would not know why we should prefer Gandhi to his murderers, since they also have an ethical system. The radical difference between gandhian ethics and that of his assassins is to be found in their concrete contents and realization. This fundamental difference is, theoretically and practically, a political difference.

Prem Purachatra

I think it is correct to say that the greatness and success of Gandhi were due precisely to his complete grasp of the Indian conditions and to his application of the concepts of truth and nonviolence, as understood in India, to the Indian way of life. This would not have succeeded, I think, in other countries, or at least in some other countries, such as in my own country. Though we share some of India's cultural heritage, the gandhian methods would not have suited the mentality of our people. At the time when Gandhi was at the height of his powers and the apex of his career, we were at a loss to understand his methods. We admired him, of course; but we wondered how going round in a loin cloth, drinking goat's milk, eating vegetables and engaging in mass spinning operations could bring down the might of the British Empire. This was something we could not understand because we looked at it from a different angle entirely.

 Now, although we have never been colonized, we

were subjected to an equally great pressure in another direction, namely, the impact of western technology. We had to cope with western technology if not colonialism, and we resolved that the best way to do it was to do exactly the opposite of what Gandhi did, namely, to adopt as rapidly as possible all the implications of that technology. In our opinion, we either had to adopt western technology or perish—in fact, the philosophy that if you can't beat them, join them. Hence, as rapidly as we could, we changed to western ways of living, including the adoption of western clothes, the western system of education, and western methods generally. This policy may have suited some countries of Asia, but later we came to realize that Gandhi's method was exactly right for India. In fact, we were mistaken in criticizing him, or belittling him, for his methods. His methods were absolutely correct for India and for what he wanted to achieve. This is a point of view which, though a novel one, may be worth considering, since some other countries, besides mine, held the same idea.

In Gandhi's case, the fact that he went to the villages was, to my mind, a very important thing. He went to the grass roots. He saw what was needed in the village rather than in the more sophisticated cities. And in that he was absolutely right, as we learnt later, because by going back to the villages, by going back to the ancient traditions of India, he found the very weapon, if I may call it

a weapon, which the British could not cope with.

Now our experience with westerners—I am referring only to the British for the sake of convenience—was that we had to be more British than the British to beat them at their own game. This was our concept. But this was entirely wrong in the case of India; it would not have applied in the case of India. So Gandhi employed exactly the right method. The British could have put down insurrections or any armed struggles and the use of armed forces. But they were completely at a loss and they were defeated when they were confronted with this original tactic of Gandhi. I think it is well worth considering this, when we are talking about the application of his technique. He was absolutely right, I think; and not only did he understand India and Indian thought well, he also understood what exactly could overcome the might of the British Empire.

G. Ramachandran

Even Gandhi's worst enemies on the opposite side watched him working the constructive program with deep sympathy and there was established between him and the rulers a channel of communication in the constructive program. I have a very clear recollection of how Lord Linlithgow, when he was Viceroy of India, would talk to Gandhi on rural development and when Gandhi went into the villages

to work there was no obstruction created. In other words, the constructive program was the first feeler Gandhi put forward in the nonviolent struggle against the British. It would be interesting to know how the British public reacted, not to civil disobedience—because we know how violently they reacted to civil disobedience!—but to Gandhi working at the constructive program and transforming a static Indian society into something dynamic and moving forward under the circumstances then obtaining.

Philip Noel-Baker

Mr Thapar told us that Gandhi was a supreme politician. I would add, as one who has spent fifty years in the profession, that he was a supremely successful *party* politician. Of course, he had a clear objective. He wanted to transform the India he saw into a united, secular, egalitarian and democratic society. He succeeded, as Mr Thapar said, in lifting the Indian struggle from the constitutional quagmire into which it had fallen, to the mass struggle which brought the great results that he achieved.

Of course, he had to face a very powerful opponent, an empire which understood the Roman principle of divide and rule, an empire which was capable, though I am glad to think only very rarely, of using brutal military power. But he had to face an empire, as Mr Thapar has said, which had at home

a sensitive democratic conscience, and Gandhi had the supreme gift of playing on that conscience and using it to advance the causes for which he stood. He captured not only Lord Linlithgow, but he captured, and in a much greater degree, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, who afterwards became our Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, perhaps one of the great Viceroys whom we sent to India. Gandhi had a host of British friends who went and lived with him in his ashram and with whom he was in constant correspondence. When he came to London he was guarded round our city by two Scotland Yard detectives. With gandhian prescience he quickly made them into his warm friends. One of them said, 'Perhaps Gandhi was the busiest VIP whom we had ever had to guard'. But he added: 'Gandhi was the only VIP who came home with me to tea in my South London home, to visit my family, my wife and children.' And it was characteristic of Gandhi that, when his time at the Round Table Conference was over, he invited his two Scotland Yard detectives to come back to India to help organize the police system of what was then still a great imperial domain.

Of course, no politician succeeds without a sophisticated intellectual conception of the task he has to face, and Gandhi had an analysis of his own. He was a relentless logician. He knew that if he were to unite India he must give each family to help its village, each village to help its province, each

province to help the nation. And he went one stage farther; he said that the nation must help mankind.

As I have already tried to say, Gandhi was no romantic; he was a political leader, adapting, in Mr Thapar's words, every idea and conception to the mass struggle for freedom. To him politics and ethics were not separate things. He was not the first to say that. It was Jean Jacques Rousseau who said that those who would separate politics and morals know nothing either of the one or of the other. Gandhi had a constructive program which was of vast importance for the success which he achieved. Turning it into English terms, I would say he gave his party members something to do.

Of course, he was no visionary. I reject with absolute conviction the foolish, pseudo-realistic criticism that he was too idealistic for the world in which he lived. No word is so abused as 'idealism'. Gandhi was more realistic than any of his contemporaries in any country of the world. And if I may make a reflection appropriate in Unesco House, the Charter of the United Nations might have been written by Gandhi, because the principles of the Charter are the principles by which alone a realistic international policy for man's salvation can be achieved.

He was a politician. But had he the equipment, the personal gifts, which a politician requires? Certainly not, when he left the Inner Temple in London. In

 his first law case in Bombay he was so tongue-tied,

so overcome by nervous tension, that he was incapable of cross-examining the witness on the other side. He left the court in confusion, with his client's case unheard. It was the experience he gained in South Africa, the shock of discovering the fact of racial hatred, that animated in his heart and soul the political power which he was afterwards to wield.

At the age of 24 he began to organize the South African Congress Party. The Indians had been in South Africa for thirty years. Some of them were rich, many of them were highly educated, but none of them had tried to unite the Indians to face the opposition, the oppression and the humiliation which they suffered. Gandhi, 24 years old, began the task. He formed the party. He asked people to pay subscriptions, five shillings a month, three pounds a year—ten pounds in modern value. What politician would dare to start a movement with a contribution of ten pounds a year today? But he got it. He got recruits at the rate of 300 a month. he took their subscription forms, he entered them in the ledger, he gave them receipts and he kept the party records. He organized committee meetings and he made the minutes. He did it all himself.

But he had to bring in the indentured workers: the slaves of South Africa, who came on contract to work on a plantation for five years, never to go off it. Food of a kind, shelter of a kind and ten

 shillings a month—how could these poor workers

join the Congress Party at five shillings a month? How could he touch them or reach them? Then one day a coolie came to him who had been beaten by his European master, beaten about the head with a great, wicked South African whip. His teeth were knocked out and his chest covered with his blood. Gandhi took him quickly—quickly—to a judicial authority and within minutes he had a summons issued against that European employer. Within days he blackmailed the employer into giving the indentured labourer, not compensation, but something much more important, his release from his indenture. After that, Gandhi's Congress office was invaded, first by scores and then by hundreds of indentured workers, until the Congress Party had the mass support of all the Indians who were there; and when Gandhi raised funds for food for famine-stricken India, the indentured coolies came to give their pennies to the funds which he sent home.

He was a politician by nature, by training, by achievement. And when he left South Africa to go to India, he did something much more astonishing still. He found the Congress Party at home already more than thirty years old, with its accepted leaders, its accepted constitution and its accepted principles. Other people have joined new parties in the past. Sir Winston Churchill was a liberal. He joined the Tory Party. But he did not succeed in changing the principles of the Tory Party; the Tory

Party absorbed Sir Winston Churchill. But Gandhi went to India and within years—perhaps within months—he became the accepted leader of the Congress Party. There was no question of rivalry with those who had been its presidents before. He became by his ethos, by his personality, by his reputation, Number One in the party, formulating the principles which it followed and the new policies which he made it adopt. Again he succeeded in what the previous leaders of the Congress had never thought of, in securing the masses of the people for its passionate support, a support which still in 1969 is given, so I am told, in overwhelming numbers to the Congress Party which he joined.

His program of Indian emancipation, of village crafts, of spinning, was adopted by the Congress Party. He invented new methods of political propaganda. We had no party leader who ever did the things that Gandhi did. It was a stroke of genius when he challenged the iniquitous salt tax which the British had imposed. Anybody *might* have thought of it; but it was Gandhi who did think of it. It was Gandhi who marched 200 miles to the sea-shore to pick up his illegal load of salt and who taught the Indian people, from north to south and east to west, to make their own salt where they found it, instead of buying it from the government monopoly which the British had set up.

Gandhi thought of walking barefoot from village to village, month after month. Gandhi thought of

going to prison; and he *invited* prison sentences from his oppressors. He had spent 260 days in South African prisons—that was when he made the sandals for General Smuts. He spent more than 2,000 days in British prisons in India itself. The British rulers locked him up because they thought they would silence his voice, they thought they would be able to end his influence with the people. But Gandhi knew that every day he stayed in prison increased his power.

He adopted a method, unknown to Europe, of the fast. It was by the fast to death that he achieved his most astonishing success, just before his death, in the winter of 1947-48.

It was by these methods that he made hundreds of millions of people act voluntarily, by self-decision, as he wanted them to act, as they had not acted before, but as they had perforce to act, if his great purpose was to be achieved.

Someone once remarked that Gandhi wrote and spoke too much. The Indian Government is producing some eighty large volumes of what he said and wrote. Yes, indeed, if you judge him as a literary man, it was much too much. In literature it is quality, not quantity, that matters. But for a politician, quantity may be the major instrument of what he is trying to do. Gandhi's quantity meant that in every circumstance, on every issue, in any part of India or in the rest of the world, his voice

 was heard. What he said was printed. What he said

was read and the impact of his colossal energy, his incredible physical and mental energy, was multiplied a hundredfold by the spoken and the written output which he achieved. In politics ceaseless energy is a merit, a path to success. It ruins the politician's personal life, it destroys the happiness of his family, but it achieves the end he has in view.

Some people say that Gandhi failed. Well, it is true. Ten days ago, in a South African prison, an Indian leader, a Muslim, died after eighteen months of incarceration; a failure for Gandhi, yes. But when he started his campaign in 1893, apartheid was accepted by the world at large: not a voice was raised against it. Today ninety-nine out of every hundred human beings reject apartheid.

Gandhi won world opinion by his political gifts. I would say that his method of satyagraha is perhaps now beginning to spread around the world. A great American writer, whose liberal sentiments I much appreciate, wrote the other day of Daniel Cohn-Bendit as 'a circumstance' which General de Gaulle happened to come up against. The student movement is not a 'circumstance'. It is a revolt of individual opinion, led by remarkable young men and women, which may yet play a major part in saving mankind. The student movement is satyagraha. The Aldermaston marches in England had, in my view, too narrow a purpose, but they stirred opinion. *The Times* tells me this morning

that yesterday in the United States eighteen per cent of the people stayed away from work to demonstrate against the Vietnam war. The White House spokesman described it as 'a very small affair'. But eighteen per cent of the American nation is 38 million people. When before have 38 million people gone out into the streets to demonstrate for peace? My only fear is that the students, the Aldermaston marchers, and the moratorium leaders of the United States, may again have too narrow an objective. But I express the hope that when the Vietnam war is ended, the leaders of the moratorium movement will see that their task has only just begun. They have to destroy the militarism which is the greatest curse of our modern age. Gandhi saw through the fraud, the deception and the brutality of the militarism of his day. Ours is far more sordid, because far more sophisticated than it was then. But this militarism can be and must be destroyed. We must go back to the Vedantic doctrine that the world is one family, that the brotherhood of man is a mission for all nations now.

Professor del Campo spoke of fear as the atheism of the heart. Let us not be frightened of militarism. If we stand up to the militarists, we can defeat them. I had a great master in the early days of the League of Nations, Lord Robert Cecil, and he used to say to me: 'It is something I shall never understand, but almost any man can be induced to run against a machine gun, although he knows that it almost

certainly will kill him; but almost any man will run away from a hostile editorial although he knows that it can do him nothing but good'. Here is the atheism of the heart. It is Gandhi's courage, Gandhi's resolution that we need to carry through the greatest of all the causes for which he stood.

William Eteki-Mboumoua

A remark one frequently hears in connection with Gandhi's action in South Africa is that he dealt only with the cause of the Indians in that country. If that is true, I would draw one conclusion from it. and that is, that what was characteristic of his action, what made it effective was the fact that he identified himself with *a* people. He knew the Indians; the Indians recognized themselves in him, and that is why they adopted him as their man and as their hero, and it is quite natural that he should have taken to heart mostly their problems.

If I may go farther along this line of reasoning, I would say that if Gandhi occasionally resorted to the hunger strike as a political weapon, it was because he was convinced of the identification of his own person with that of a whole nation, a whole nation that suffered when he fasted. That, of course, is not the whole meaning of the hunger strike as a political weapon. But if it had not that sense, it would be extremely difficult to understand how the hunger strike of one person should have

meant so much to so many.

Now I would like to say a word about nonviolence as a means of achieving political independence. At present many states, formerly colonial territories, have achieved independence by two ways—either through an armed struggle or through independence being finally granted to them. This implies a certain number of conclusions or consequences. Independence achieved through an armed struggle becomes meaningful, in that a people that has shed its blood for its independence is more conscious of its sacrifices and will be more aware of the responsibilities it has to bear in the future. Whereas those many peoples that have been granted their independence without a violent struggle appear to some extent to be in a less favourable situation following their independence. They are frequently headed by leaders selected for them by the former occupier and the people do not appear involved in the fate of the country.

Gandhi's nonviolence introduces a new dimension into the situation, in that it tends to prepare men to assume the obligations of independence, independence not being a value in itself. An independent people must be capable of sacrifice and must be able to rely on itself before relying on others. Nonviolence here requires the dimension of training, of preparing the soul of a people by decolonizing itself morally first. Certain

 consequences flow from this. On the cultural level,

there is the risk of having easy recourse to the morals of the former colonizing power, without an effort being made to create anything oneself. Politically speaking, authorities are established who take on dictatorial powers, precluding the masses from involvement in the political life of the country. Economically, the result is a kind of beggary even more humiliating than anything that was prevalent under the former regime, even though it goes by the name of cooperation. Gandhi was able to achieve his country's independence without exposing it to any of these risks; and he did so by making his people capable of accepting the enormous responsibility that came with independence.

Mr Maheu asked me what I meant by the collective autarky which I had mentioned as a possible threat from the mass of poor countries. First of all, I think one must recognize what the present situation is in a number of countries. There are, in Africa particularly, a number of countries which are living either on the basis of so-called cooperation, that is to say, with the help of credits granted to them generously by a few European and American countries—in other words, in a state of economic dependency; or they are in the international market as consumers and importers of industrial goods, selling their own tropical raw materials without any control on world prices and allowing foreign capital to set up their industries and exploit their natural resources.

The international situation, which continues to deepen the existing gap between the rich and the poor countries, is not, in my opinion, a satisfactory one. On another level is the situation in Gandhi's India, for which again a solution must be found. The UNCTAD, the Kennedy Round, the Algiers Conference, all these have been efforts to find a solution, but up till now none has been found and upon the horizon we see no hope of a solution. Can we, however, let the situation continue—a situation which presents very serious dangers for the world as a whole?

Learning from the boycott of imported goods by Gandhi, the poor and impoverished countries could perhaps become aware of the situation and employ an economic autarky which would make use of this principle of world solidarity. So long as the third world remains abandoned to its own resources and its doomed stagnation by the egoism of the rich countries, these poor countries must find a way of reacting and finding a solution on their own. If they were able to build up a collective self-sufficiency, even if with the help of a thousand Gandhis, the industries of the western countries would then cease to find outlets, western production would just accumulate in the warehouses, and in the western markets there would be a terrible conflict between the trusts and the big financiers, large-scale unemployment and, in a word, a very serious economic situation. The monopolists would then

realize that it would be in their interest, without too many conditions, to help the developing countries. It is in this sense that I have said that if the situation cannot be improved otherwise, then a formula of collective economic self-sufficiency might be explored. Such a collective economic self-sufficiency would give the countries of the third world a bargaining power which they do not have today. It would also give them an opportunity to try to live on what they have and to be creative within the framework of their independence.

Mention has been made of the dualism between economics and ethics in our countries. Well, this does not exist. When we talk of development we always say to ourselves, development for what and development for whom? Economics is, after all, a convention, a series of operations, with the aim of making life possible for people and with a view to improving life. Therefore, there is no sense in separating economics and ethics. After all, we want an economy for man.

It has been asked if Gandhi's idea of developing the village economy was not an approach which could constitute an obstacle to broader development. Whatever its value elsewhere, the idea is nevertheless valid for rural countries like Africa and India, where the village is the fundamental cell which must be the basis for any groundwork at the economic, social and cultural levels. On closer examination we shall find that the principles of Gandhi's village

development can be, and are being, applied in Africa.

Community life so close to Gandhi's ideas, as we have in Africa, makes it possible for our people to organize themselves in order to develop their economic growth, and this should help in preventing the exodus from the countryside. Our countries are not urbanized countries; and overall urbanization, as we have seen it in some countries, has such frightening consequences that to come back to planning on the basis of the village, where the real roots of our countries lie, can be a very real solution to some of the modern problems. But, of course, the village cannot be allowed to remain an obsolete survival of the Middle Ages. It is evident that the village dwellers must rid themselves of feudal ideas, anachronisms and obsolete traditions. The application of well-thought-out modern ideas to these village units could then give a tremendous drive to their development, so that they serve as units for the development of a whole country. These principles, which were so valid for India, I am sure can be valid and are valid for the continent of Africa, for Africa too is tending towards self-reliance, which is the only way of salvation for our countries.

With regard to education, as I have said earlier, we have to arrive at a cultural revolution which would identify itself with revolution in education. Men of

 my generation in Africa learnt as little boys in

France learn their lessons. We were de-tribalized intellectuals. I feel that school education should not be some ethereal entity, isolated from everything else, but a matter of the building up of man. And the building up of man in our country, South Africa, traditionally has been one based on initiation, which built up a man's personality, placed him in his environment and made it possible for him to master his environment and to find his place in society. Gandhi's formula makes this precisely possible. In our present time, when the value of western education is being so strongly contested, we must question it and contest it to an even greater extent.

Jeanne Hersch

Mr Noel-Baker has told us, even without raising a question mark, who were those who could be considered today as successors of Gandhi. He told us that the action of Daniel Cohn-Bendit was satyagraha. I do not want to go into that here. I shall just put a question mark in the margin. I feel that to say today, twenty years after the death of Gandhi, in a world so changed, who or what a satyagrahi is, is a dangerous exercise. The criteria of satyagraha are very subtle. I do not think they can be objectivized completely, and in so far as they could be made objective, it would be extremely difficult to find them united.

I also feel that it is wrong to decide so quickly that those who are on the side of what one defends have courage and that those who disagree with oneself are without it. I believe that one does not know who is courageous and who is cowardly. At any rate, I feel it is very risky to mobilize the dead, and particularly a dead man like Gandhi, for this or that cause that is being defended today. I feel this should not be done; and if one does do it, one risks bringing about a situation of violence.

Olivier Lacombe

It may be useful to revert briefly to one of the specific actions of Gandhi in his own country—his action concerning the caste system and the untouchables. I am mentioning this without passing any judgement. I should like simply to say how this extremely difficult problem appeared to Gandhi and how he personally solved it. It would be up to others to draw any conclusions, if this is necessary.

The first comment that should be made is that Gandhi was a mere adolescent when he saw around him, in his own family, the problem of the untouchables. He was shocked and he dared to say so to his mother. It is, however, not something that came directly into his life. It was rather an elementary reaction of his personality.

My second point will not be new to my Indian friends, of course, but people from other countries

do not fully realize the strength of the caste system, particularly at the time when Gandhi was dealing with it. The Indian caste system is a sore point for sociologists and historians. Although there are excellent works on the subject by historians and sociologists, a great deal concerning the origin and development of this unique social system, which cannot be reduced to anything comparable in the world, still remains obscure. As Mr Thapar said, Gandhi refrained from doing away with the caste system overnight. And yet it was perhaps because Gandhi attacked the caste system from one specific point of view—the untouchables—that the Constitution of new India was able to lay down that caste had no value whatsoever in public mores. No one in India today, under the law, can be kept away from his job or purchase or any public convenience because of his caste.

Now let us briefly look at what is, or was not so long ago, the caste system. The Indian languages have two words to denote caste, whereas in the paucity of our western vocabulary we have only one word. One of the Indian words is varna, which refers to the hierarchical aspect of Indian society. The other word is jati, which refers to the hereditary aspect of belonging to a caste. The two aspects are intertwined.

How did Gandhi consider this system? What struck him—and he said as much in fairly explicit terms—was that what was best in the system, what

justified not the misuses or abuses of which it was guilty, but its perennial character, was the fact that it was a system of complementary *duties* within a given society, the Indian society.

When Gandhi answered a circular from the United Nations at the time it was preparing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he placed his emphasis upon what seemed to him to be the essential truth, namely, that the problem of rights had to be tackled by way of the problem of obligations, and to the extent that the obligations were defined and accepted the rights which stem from them were ipso facto respected. You may say, these are all fine words. After all, these complementary obligations in Indian society are not on the basis of equality but on the basis of a hierarchical order. How can you reconcile this hierarchy with the principle of equality?

This is precisely where Gandhi stepped in. He neither insists on nor ignores the hierarchical aspects. He rather forces the Hindu system of morality to revert to one of its components, what has always made it a balanced system in the Indian universe, namely, the consideration of what you would call general duties or obligations, the obligations of humanity as such. If you have caste duties, there are also universal duties or obligations which are incumbent upon every human being, and this is precisely where truth and nonviolence step in.

 For truth and nonviolence are the dharma of

everyone, whereas the professional obligations and social functions which stem from a system of division of labour—one of the components of the social structure of India—tend to divide men; and if you wish to reconcile them you have to do so within a morality which is universally applicable. Now, the whole art of Gandhi was to base himself on this universal morality and to give value to and ennoble the obligations accruing to each caste. Moreover he endeavoured to impose the obligation of manual work for everyone; and not only of manual work, but doing the most menial tasks, including scavenging, without delegating the impure functions to others.

Without proclaiming the abolition of castes, Gandhi nevertheless compelled the average Indian to think in terms of human equality; in other words, to use the capital of universal morality, universalize it and give it a contemporary ring and meaning. In doing so, Gandhi did not respect the sociological structure of the caste system; rather, he put his stamp on it. The sociologist describes. Gandhi is not interested in sociology. As a moralist, as a politician in the active sense of the word, he puts his stamp on the system and bends it without destroying it, and in such a way that little by little both the spirit and the meaning of the system begin to change. Now, what will happen at the end of this process no one can really say. It is possible that the

 caste system will survive by becoming more flexible

and universal, and by shedding its mistakes. Perhaps what is in public law will become part of the tradition at some point; we do not know.

If Gandhi was particularly interested in the problem of the untouchables, it was because he realized too well that it was not merely an abuse of the system but an extreme manifestation of it as well. The untouchable is in a paradoxical situation in that he is outside the caste structure and, at the same time, part of the system. He belongs to the system negatively. He is indispensable to the system, but is an impure object for everyone. The first thing that Gandhi did was to abolish this notion of impurity, which meant a degradation of the human personality of the untouchable. By attacking this part of it he forced the system to reform itself and, whatever the future will hold in store, the people of India were enabled to exclude caste as a valid notion in public law.

G. Ramachandran

Nothing shows better how Gandhi's mind moved from point to point upward than when he dealt with caste and untouchability. When I first met him as a young student, I quarrelled with him bitterly, saying, 'What is the use of your attacking untouchability? You must cut at the roots of the caste system, and if you don't do that, you are doing nothing.' He said: 'What is the caste system?

There is the brahmin at the top; and below him is the kshatriya, 20 per cent untouchable; below the kshatriya is the vaisya, another 20 per cent untouchable; below the vaisya is the sudra, another 20 per cent untouchable; and below them all is the untouchable, one hundred per cent untouchable. The moment I knock out untouchability altogether, the whole thing will collapse like a house of cards.' This is what happened in India. He brought the entire nation to focus on a major evil and while cracking the major evil all the lesser evils crumbled to pieces. Later in his life he adopted such a radical attitude in regard to the caste system that some of us who once quarrelled with him looked aghast at his revolutionary ideas. Towards the end of his life, there never was a more uncompromising enemy of the entire caste fabric than Gandhi.

Walpola Rahula Thero

When Gandhi speaks of religion, he does not mean a state religion. When he says politics should not be divorced from religion, he means the spiritual side of a man, the ethical convictions of a man. Suppose a Christian does in politics some un-Christian act. If I question him, he will say: No, I did not act as a Christian, I acted as a politician. If I question a Buddhist Prime Minister who acted in politics in an un-Buddhist way, he will say: No, I did not act as a Buddhist, I acted as a politician. I think what is

necessary for us to understand here is that life cannot be divided into water-tight compartments like that. You cannot argue that at 9 o'clock in the morning you are a Buddhist or a Christian and at 10 o'clock you are a politician.

M. Drobyshev

I am afraid that some remarks which were made here earlier can create an impression that the scholarly study of Gandhi's thought and his method of political activity began in the Soviet Union only a dozen years ago. Of course it is not so. An extensive literature on him had been created in our country much earlier. Many Soviet authors were interested in Gandhi's views and activities. Among them was Lunacharsky, Peoples' Commissar of Education and an outstanding Soviet educationalist and cultural leader, who wrote a special article on Gandhi as early às in 1923. We know that Lenin himself was very much interested in Indian problems. M. N. Roy, in his memoirs, writes that Lenin looked upon Gandhi as a recognized leader of the national liberation movement in India and believed that as an inspirer and leader of a mass movement Gandhi was a revolutionary.

There was, I should say, a one-sided and incorrect assessment of Gandhi in the works of some Soviet scholars. But one can't help seeing some objective reasons which explain this pehnomenon. Among

them was the complex nature of Gandhi's outlook, the contradictions in some of his practical activity and also the lack of necessary material for a comprehensive study of his activities. However, in the more recent works, Soviet authors have been able to overcome this one-sidedness and provide a comprehensive analysis of Gandhi's role in the freedom movement of India.

The Soviet people regard Gandhi as a great patriot and humanist, who for many years led the freedom movement of the Indian people. We hold in the greatest esteem his selfless service of the Indian people, his untiring work for uniting the anti-imperialist forces of India, and his contribution to the cause of peace and friendship among nations. We admire his uncompromising struggle against racial and communal prejudices. But all this does not mean we must share his theoretical outlook or his approach to the development of human society.

Philip Noel-Baker

When Professor Hersch reproaches me with mobilizing the dead to advance the causes of today, I would reply that the great thinkers of human history never die. I would ask her: why are we in this room this afternoon? It is to keep alive the power of Gandhi's thought. I do not hesitate to use the power of Gandhi's thought to challenge what I regard as the greatest evil of our modern time.

third working session

the significance and implications of truth and nonviolence in the world today

17 october 1969

chairman: william eteki-mboumoua

Remarking that the day's subject might provoke some 'challenge and contestation', the Chairman, Mr William Eteki-Mboumoua, said: 'But in Unesco House I know we are not against a certain amount of honest argument'.

Ravan Farhadi

Before the second world war, the world was little aware of Gandhi, though there were, certainly, a number of writers who knew Gandhi and wrote about him. It was, I think, the horrors of the war and the totalitarian ideologies of Nazism and Fascism, which provided a turning point in western thought in the post-war years, that deflected the attention of intellectuals, and in certain cases, of the masses, towards gandhian thinking.

In the Bandung meeting of 1955, the dominant ideology was not, strictly speaking, gandhian at all. No doubt the influence of Gandhi was to be felt, but in the course of the meeting support was very forcibly expressed for armed movements to resist foreign occupation and influence. In 1961 again, at the meeting of non-aligned countries in Belgrade—although, of course, non-alignment itself is a theme that is close to gandhian thought—the participants did not take an attitude that is completely in conformity with the gandhian teaching. They did not articulate any precepts of nonviolence, at least not to an extent that might jeopardize the struggle

for national independence.

No doubt, the spirit of Gandhi has exerted an influence on the Indian Constitution. But the Constitution itself was not formulated for the sake of an India which would be in conformity with Gandhi's ideas. Rather it aims at creating a modern nation which would adopt the technological road to progress along lines which are not in conformity with gandhian thinking.

It has even been said—no doubt, out of our respect for Gandhi—that the Declaration of Human Rights bears a certain Gandhi stamp. But, in fact, the Declaration of Human Rights flows from preceding declarations which were made a hundred years before Gandhi—such as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen by the French Revolution, the United States Declaration of Independence and, of course, the whole body of socialist thought.

Although Gandhi may be said to have put a certain stamp on modern thinking and modern efforts for peace and justice, no one could be one hundred per cent gandhian or follow the road to Gandhism in all respects, especially when one is in a position of leadership or responsibility. Gandhi had wanted that a peasant should be the Prime Minister of India, but this in fact did not occur; and it cannot occur, conditions being what they are in a world where technology predominates and the machine governs every day. It is a world where the

great powers are heavily armed, where they manufacture mass slaughter weapons and then sit together on the one topic of how not to use these weapons which they have taken such great pains to work out. It is a world in which technology has achieved what Gandhi has not been able to achieve -- the practical abrogation of frontiers. Gandhi had said that God did not create frontiers. But in substance the boundaries are there. I cannot travel without my passport, but inter-continental missiles do not know these frontiers. Anti-Gandhism has triumphed.

Now let us look at India. In India we have thinkers who follow the gandhian teaching and others who are recognized as the heirs of Gandhi. Indeed we have ministers, or former ministers, who go on fasts so that there should be no conflict between religious communities. All this is perfectly true. But these people have a very limited influence on what actually happens in the country and how the international and national policies of India are conducted.

In the area of peace, India is a country which has made a definite contribution. It has been one of the central pillars of the non-alignment structure. But between non-alignment and gandhism there is quite a distance. Can it then be considered that Gandhi has been rejected? No, because everybody in India respects Gandhi, or nearly everybody, even those who murdered him. There are extremists—but,

obviously, who would not respect his memory? But between that and following his teaching there is a very considerable distance indeed.

There are many ways of not following someone. The first way is to say he was wrong. There are very few people who openly say this about Gandhi. Some people do say that he was wrong but they have very little by way of a following; they are not fashionable anyway. There is another way, which is much more devious and which consists in saying, 'If Gandhi were alive he would have said this or he would have said that, or he would have said what I am saying'. This is what I would describe as Neo-Gandhism.

Here is part of what I would describe as a Neo-Gandhist text. It is a letter written by an Indian and published in the *Times of India* of 7 October 1969.

> 'Badshah Khan's oft-repeated theme of our having forgotten Gandhiji sounds like a voice from the past, urging us in some romantic manner to go back to a forgotten Utopia. Are we to prove vulnerable to this Messianic appeal? Even his understanding of Gandhiji's life and work seems to be so a-historical. Gandhiji played a tremendous role in arousing this country into a collective self-awareness and organizing this awareness into a highly pragmatic political machine. Building on such a foundation, we had then to look forward and achieve new

> breakthroughs in social and political engineering. New yardsticks were needed in this, and new methods to accomplish the new tasks. In these 22 years, during which Badshah Khan seems to have lost touch with Indian realities, we have achieved a great deal on all sides. The task now is to carry on this work with even greater attention in the future. Just at a time when we are beginning to cross new thresholds in our polities, it would be an act of regression to succumb to some sentimental harking back to an idyllic (and in some ways imaginative) past. Such a mood of self-pity and self-denigration can only stifle our will as a nation. Gandhiji would have been the last person to endorse such a mood.'

Well, this is what I would describe as Neo-Gandhism. It consists in preaching an ideology and invoking Gandhi's posthumous support for it.

There is no denying that Gandhi has left his stamp on the history of our times and that it is a stamp which has great historical importance. Gandhism is there but Gandhi is not alive among us. We are convinced that without Gandhi many otherwise familiar events would not have taken place; or at any rate, a certain way of looking at things would not have taken shape. But it would be untrue to say that Gandhi is with us and that the world at large is following Gandhi.

Miloslav Krasa

It has been emphasized that Gandhi was, of all things, a great politician. This is very true. He was great in conceiving broad political perspectives and in organizing the strategy of a mass struggle of immense dimensions. But at the same time, I think he was no less great in many of the pettier things that formed the everyday life and politics of India.

We should, for example, not forget that Gandhi was also a trade union leader, an aspect which found its first expression in experiments in Ahmedabad where, with the full force of his authority, he tried to take up the problems of labour, basing himself on the idea of trusteeship. This idea of trusteeship was, of course, in contrast to or even in conflict with the other existing systems, both revolutionary trade unionism and trade unionism of the British pattern, as we might call it. Nevertheless, in any history of the labour movement, one cannot fail to include Gandhi among those who tried to influence its development.

One of the methods of modern science, especially in the social sciences, is field research. During his lifetime, Gandhi did a tremendous lot of field research in India. He was familiar, as no other leader of his time, with the problems of his country and of its 700,000 villages. Parts of his teaching, which seemed quaint from a distance, do not seem so any longer, when we realize today that they are

really based on first-hand experience. Of course, I do not see any future for a developing society which does not build up its heavy industrial base, without which you cannot get the economy to move. But, on the other hand, the charkha, the spinning wheel, and all the small local industries are of immediate help. Thus instead of one sector fighting the other, perhaps a harmonious combination of the two would be the ideal.

Again, Gandhi was always much concerned about the education of the masses. He not only connected the problem of education very closely with the liberation movement but he was also very critical of the existing conditions. Anybody who is familiar with the state of Indian education during the colonial period must agree that his objections were really true. What were his objections? First, that it is based on foreign culture to the almost total exclusion of indigenous culture. Secondly, that it ignores the culture of the heart and the hand and surrenders itself to the use of substitute hands. And lastly, that real education is impossible through a foreign language.

I think these ideas are quite up-to-date, although I was struck to find in them a similarity to the ideas of the Czech writer of the seventeenth century, Comenius, whose anniversary will be celebrated by Unesco in 1970. They are in conformity also with the most modern educational conceptions. Although

 Gandhi was identified with the social strata of India

which was educated through the foreign language and foreign ideas, he went so far as to say that to impart a knowledge of English to the millions is to enslave them, and further that it is the English-knowing Indian who has helped enslave India. In the Independence Pledge, which Gandhi drafted in 1930, he had this to say: 'Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings; our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.'[31] But it is also through education that we can get rid of these chains.

N. G. Ranga

The world today is face to face with the conflict between authority and labour. Whether you see that authority in the shape of capitalist enterprise or state enterprise, otherwise known as state-capitalist, there is no denying the conflict between these two forces. How is it to be resolved? One way of resolving it is to be seen, for example, in Soviet Russia, and another way in England. In between, you have Yugoslavia, where they are trying to get over this conflict in their own semi-communist, semi-socialist, semi-humanist manner.

In Gandhi's view, it is possible to resolve this conflict in two ways. One is the method of tripartite consultations, in which decisions taken are implemented by the concerned parties and, where they fail to do so, by the Government. That is the

line taken by the ILO.

As a trade unionist Gandhi organized labour in Ahmedabad, and when they decided to go on strike he supported them. When some of them tried to be black-legs, he protested by going on hunger strike. Thus through his own suffering and the suffering of other workers, he made it possible, as well as necessary, for the capitalists to reach an agreement with labour. That is the line which the Indian National Trade Union Congress is following.

There is another aspect of the matter which ought to be highlighted. Is the whole world to go along this line of employers and employees? Should we not also find a place for people who are self-employed, who are their own masters and who work for their own benefit and for the benefit of society as a whole? There are self-employed people in the West also, but they have come to be displaced, to a very large extent, by wage slavery, by employer-employee relations. It is not so in the East or in South America. Indeed, Yugoslavia, a communist country, is trying to encourage the sector of self-employed people. It has a large number of artisans, who have come to be organized into cooperatives and are being helped in every way. But in England, self-employed people are being discouraged because the state wants to have more and more control over everybody, and self-employed people are just the ones who achieve the
 maximum possible economic self-governance and

autonomy.

You have in India crores of peasants who are self-employed and who have between two and five acres of land. Wherever you have a peasant economy there is self-employment. This self-employment is free from the evils of industrialization, free from the evils of wage slavery and employer-employee relations. It is non-exploitative. Self-employed peasants do not employ hired labour on a large scale; never more than five continuously throughout the year and occasionally between 20 and 50 people a day. You can certainly find ways and means to prevent the exploitation of even that agricultural labour. Gandhi was in favour of preventing such exploitation by insisting upon minimum wages and humane conditions for them. Some of these peasants do also lease out their lands to tenants who are themselves agricultural workers. There also one can think of tenancy legislation. Gandhi was in favour of it.

This sector of self-employment is one which has to be developed as an alternative to the present wage and employer system. Would it be possible for the world to develop it? Indeed, it is developing. In spite of efforts in other directions, in many of the communist countries today, the peasant economy is coming back slowly into its own; not fully, because the collectives and the cooperatives within a collective farm are still there. In most of the communist countries peasants are being allowed to

own small parcels of land. Even where they do not own it, they can cultivate it on their own, by themselves, enjoying the fruits of their labour. In this way, self-employment is slowly coming back into existence in the communist and socialist countries.

I do not consider that self-employment should be confined to agriculture. It can be extended to industries also. John Strachey has shown that in England all the industries were not dominated by large-scale enterprises, that more people were employed in small-scale industries and quite a large number of them were finding outlets in self-employment.

What was the message of Marx? He gave a ray of hope to those people who lost their self-employment and became wage slaves. He wanted to help them to gain power over the instruments of production. through politics and also through industrial reorganization. Why? Because they lost their self-employment. What Gandhi had tried to do and what so many of us who follow him are trying to do is to help the industrial and agricultural workers to become their own masters, so that this nexus of employment and exploitation can be eliminated. This is an aspect of Gandhi's teaching which has to be given serious thought.

Thirdly, I should like to pose the question: Is Gandhi relevant to present-day politics? An

 impression has gone round that India has already

bidden goodbye to Gandhi. But this is not so. Take the question of the Bomb. Everyone knows that India is capable of manufacturing atom bombs if she wishes to. She has the know-how, having achieved it more than fifteen years ago. Why then has India chosen not to undertake their manufacture? Many reasons have been given. But the fundamental reason is that India's heart is still devoted to Gandhi. Many of us no longer belong to the ruling party in India and yet we support the Government's stand that we will not manufacture the atom bomb. I would therefore say that Gandhi is not dead, he is not a man of the past, he is not being forgotten. Rather he is very much alive.

Lastly, is Gandhi relevant for the world as a whole or only for India? It is true, as Mr Farhadi argued, that Gandhi was not necessarily the inspirer of the United Nations Charter or the Philadelphia Charter of the ILO or the Human Rights Charter. Nevertheless he is one of the great world forces which brought about the atmosphere in which the United Nations and the ILO were able to achieve what they have achieved.

Who else, I wonder, is a greater humanist than the one who tried to help, through his own suffering, the single largest group of human beings—the 60 million untouchables of India—to achieve equal citizenship rights with all other people.

Saul Karsz

It has often been said that one of the misfortunes that can befall the founder of a movement, is for him to beget a certain type of disciple or follower. We all know the type of followers for whom the movement is so closely identified with the founder that they consider themselves free from the need to make any innovation, adducing the pretext that everything has already been said and realized by the founder for ever and ever. That is true, I think, of Gandhi and it will be true of any founder of any movement. Nothing explains this better than Karl Marx's letter, in which he wrote, 'I am not a Marxist'.

Gandhi left behind him a message of 'love', 'truth' and 'goodness'. There are two things, and only two things, that we can do with this message. We may take it at the level of the texts and of the ideas expressed in them; that it says what it says, that it says so once and for all, and that everything has already been said. On the other hand, we can consider it to be a message with certain objectives for us but which are unspecified. The message of Gandhi is a quest for truth in a certain situation in India. It thus has a certain determined content. Whether this message is valid for Europe and for India today, it is for us to say. But we cannot do this merely by conducting an academic-cum-erudite debate on Gandhi.

On this question of whether Gandhi is alive or dead, I would submit that we are making this decision every moment of our life, not so much by what we say but by what we do. At each point in our lives, saying what we say, doing what we do, we are ourselves deciding whether we are on the side of Gandhi or on the side of his murderers. Gandhi is alive to the extent that his universal message is conveyed by our filling it with specific meanings and significances in our own individual situations. On the other hand, Gandhi is dead if we consider that the gandhian scheme has given us a framework which can fit into all circumstances.

The question really is, are we making a necrophilic or a vivifying homage? Of course, I do not mean to offend anyone with this question. All I want is to pose a capital and fundamental question on whose answer would depend whether Gandhi's message is pertinent or obsolete.

Only each and every one of us can and must answer it.

A. G. Sheorey

In his historic speech at the Gowalia Tank maidan in Bombay on that fateful night of 8 August 1942, a few hours before his arrest, which precipitated the volcanic outburst of the last phase of the Indian revolution, Gandhi had clearly declared that he
 could not sit silent when the whole world was in the

death clasp of violence and war.

His struggle for Indian independence was not an end in itself but a means to a larger end—which was to save the world from the orgy of violence and hatred and bring peace to a suffering humanity. That peace, unfortunately, still eludes us. Peace for Gandhi was not merely a cause but a passion, a mission for which he lived and died. Though he was born in India and was the product of her culture, philosophy and thought, he did not belong to India alone but to all humanity. India was no doubt the primary laboratory of his experiment, which he had earlier conceived in South Africa, and a grateful nation can never forget the dynamic role he played in helping her regain her soul and self-respect as a free people. But he never thought that his task was done with the achievement of Indian independence. In fact, he believed that Indian freedom was only a stepping stone towards the larger freedom of all the peoples of the world, who must live in justice and peace, as God willed it. In fact, he wrote as far back as in 1921: 'An India prostrate at the feet of Europe can give no hope to humanity. An India awakened and free has a message of peace and goodwill to a groaning world.'[32] On another occasion he declared: 'My goal is friendship with the world.'[33] He was confident and optimistic about his mission when he said: 'I have that implicit faith in my mission that if it succeeds, as it will succeed, as it is bound to succeed, history will record it as a

movement designed to knit all people in the world together, not as hostile to one another but as parts of one whole.'[34]

Thus the picture of Gandhi that emerges before us is of a dedicated spirit who believes in one world and all mankind as one family. In fact, he reiterated and reemphasized the basic concept of Indian culture and tradition that has come down through the ages: 'vasudha eva kutambakam' ('The whole world is our family').

This goal of one world is no longer the empty dream of a poet, or the wishful thought of a philosopher or a saint, but it has become an urgent imperative of the world situation today, which has undergone a revolutionary change under the impact of science. While science has given fantastic gifts and blessings to humanity, it has also placed in its hands enormous engines of destruction, which, if used, can only mean the victory of ruin and chaos and the ultimate defeat of man.

But man is not destined to vanish. He can be killed, but he cannot be destroyed, because his soul is deathless and his spirit is irrepressible. Therefore, though the situation seems dark in the context of the confrontation between the super powers, the silver lining is provided by the amazing phenomenon that the very nations which have spent incalculable resources and energy for the production of deadly weapons are desperately trying to find out how they might never be used. They threaten each other,

intimidate each other and go to the brink, but before the fatal hour arrives they withdraw from the brink.

Gandhi said: Don't do this out of fear. Why should one man be afraid of another man, he asked. Man should stand in fear of God alone and then he can shed all other fears. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality, he believed. Love is a greater force than hate, he said. Love creates and recreates while hate destroys. Hatred coupled with violence leads to wars and more wars, and total war in the context of the atom bomb means the end and the deluge. Therefore, this vicious circle of violence and hatred must he broken if humanity is to be saved from disaster, Gandhi pleaded. He was alive when the atom bomb was exploded on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He declared: 'I regard the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science.'[35] Then he goes on to ask: 'What is the antidote? Has it (the atom bomb) antiquated nonviolence?' 'On the contrary,' he says, emphatically: 'Nonviolence is the only thing that is now left in the field. It is the only thing that the atom bomb cannot destroy....Unless now the world adopts nonviolence it will spell certain suicide for mankind.'[36] In addition to offering nonviolence, Gandhi pleaded that the root cause of wars—exploitation—must also end if there is to be peace on earth. He said: 'I have no doubt that unless big

nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence, of which war is the natural expression and the atom bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world.'[37]

Gandhi believed that nonviolence was a spiritual force, a soul force which was discovered much earlier than the atom bomb. The atom bomb is the aberration and perversion of science. Science is undoubtedly a tremendous force, a power which can be harnessed for the good of mankind: but it is a power which is not sentient. It has no mind or soul of its own. It has to be tempered and controlled.

But what is the force that can control it? Politics, which suffers from the arrogance of power and the surfeit of egotism and passions? The power of science is dangerous in the hands of politicians. Besides, they cannot rise above their national or party commitments, a limitation which is inherent in their situation. On the other hand, the problems of the world have grown so enormous that they cannot be solved by a narrow, partisan or national view of things; they can only be tackled through a cosmic or global perspective, through a vision that encompasses the whole world and beyond. This vision can be offered only by men of science, who recognize no frontiers of race, colour, creed or nationality, and by men of spirituality, the philosophers and the poets, the sages and the saints, the artists and the musicians, the creative thinkers

and men of true religion, and humanists like Gandhi who always sense and feel the truth, beauty and goodness of all creation and see in it the glorious manifestation of the divine. These men have to come together—the men of science and spirituality—to forge a new communion, after liberating themselves from the shackles of power politics or narrow religiosity, and work together to create a new religion of man in the world of today and tomorrow.

In the dynamics of the present situation, the age of politics and religion, as it is understood in the narrow and conventional sense, is receding and the age of science and spirituality, which is the essence of all religion, has begun to emerge. It is the compulsive need of the hour that these two new forces, science and spirituality, must walk together hand in hand in the service of all humanity. Science without spirituality will run amuck and destroy mankind and spirituality without science will cease to be a dynamic social force and lead to escapism and isolation. But science with spirituality can lead to the ushering in of the kingdom of God on earth. This can and will happen because the fabulous resources that are at present being frittered away in the manufacture of nuclear weapons will then be diverted towards the eradication of poverty, hunger, disease, and so on, so that there will be no tensions, hatreds and jealousies between the haves and have-nots, between the developed nations and the

under-developed nations and, therefore, no provocation for conflicts and wars. In fact, if the creative and constructive genius of man is harnessed to the power of science, there will be enough and more for everybody in this God's good and beautiful earth. It will then really be a happy place to live in. That is the central theme of Gandhi's philosophy of action in relation to the world and humanity.

Shall we still ask the question whether Gandhi is relevant? The Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, on the opening day of the Gandhi Centenary Year in October 1968, acknowledged that the Charter of the United Nations is founded on the principles and ideals propounded by Gandhi. Martin Luther King, the martyred leader of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, declared that the world has to choose between nonviolence and non-existence: there is no third alternative. He added with confidence that nonviolence is inevitable. In his significant message on the death of Gandhi, General Douglas MacArthur said that there was no future for mankind unless nations and people turned away from war and violence and accepted the way of Gandhi.

Gandhi all his life worked for the renaissance of the human spirit and for the spiritual regeneration of man. If man redeemed himself, the world would automatically stand redeemed, he believed.

Radivoj Uvalic

The anti-dogmatic and self-critical spirit of Gandhi is, I believe, an expression of his permanent search for truth. It is certain that Gandhi considered all the diversities and complexities of human society, the historical factors leading to any particular situation and the need to adapt oneself to that situation when he showed that India must seek its own way without importing foreign solutions, and estimate its own possibilities without giving up its mode of life. This rejection of universal panaceas implies that each nation must find its own way, taking into consideration the specific conditions of time and place. And this is where Gandhi's doctrine is so close to present-day problems. Considered from the contemporary historical point of view Gandhi's teaching seems to be much closer and more acceptable now than at the time of the liberation struggles, in the twenties and thirties, against the Fascist danger in Europe, when class interests, which determined the content of progressive aspirations, also determined the concepts and methods of struggle. In a climate characterized by increasing violence on the part of the Fascist aggressive forces, it was impossible to accept nonviolence as an effective way of defending oneself against the oppression and darkness which began to swallow, extremely quickly, one European country after another. In Yugoslavia, although we believed

in the progressive character of the Indian Congress and knew of the marvellous qualities of Gandhi and the great love and confidence which he inspired in his people, it did not seem to us that through nonviolence the fight against Fascism would be successful during the pre-war period.

Today, when we are trying to assess once again the historical value of the work of Gandhi, we must recognize the air which characterized our attitude in the past. In the post-war period, India and Yugoslavia have come closer to each other. The Yugoslavs have been able to meet the Indian people and find out the country's real qualities, its social realities and its history. This image of India is quite different from the one we had before the war, when our main sources of information were usually the representatives of colonial powers.

Let us take the basic principle of Gandhi's teaching on nonviolence. We do not think it can be interpreted absolutely as something which would liquidate, in one fell swoop, the application of physical constraints in all their historically inherited forms—like defence against foreign aggression, repression of communalism or preventing the violation of basic standards of human respect and tolerance. But if we take the confrontation of nonviolence and violence as a long-term historical process, which tends towards the re-education of man in the spirit of mutual tolerance, better understanding of the interdependence and relativity

of various social phenomena, the elimination of feelings of hatred and intolerance and the need to admit different points of view and interests, then it acquires an importance which is both acceptable and very timely.

Today's great problem, which has many facets, is the arbitrary recourse to force. In trying to find a way for the weak to defend themselves against the arbitrariness and violence of the strong, Gandhi discovered the need of the time—nonviolent massive disobedience. Violence, of course, did not disappear entirely from the struggle of the Indians at that time; it did espouse various forms, as we all know. However, non-cooperation without recourse to violence was the basic instrument of the Indian resistance. It had a way of disarming the adversary and having a decisive influence on the final victory. The increasing difference of opinion in the contemporary world concerning the means of political, economic and military pressure, makes Gandhi's claim towards the elimination of the use of force and the application of nonviolent methods not only timely but a burning issue.

Gandhi's concept of social organization, where the power of the state would be limited as much as possible, is an ideal which is particularly close to the Yugoslav concept of the organization of socialist democracy based on self-management. Gandhi always emphasized that decentralization of political power was a sine qua non for the creation of a

nonviolent society. According to him, true democracy, based not on profit but on human relations, called for the full autonomy of small social communities. He called for the decentralization of the economy in order to diminish present-day inequalities and social conflicts and to give a measure of autarky to the villages. He was an enthusiast for cooperatives. In our contemporary society, he would certainly be much closer to the Yugoslav concept of socialism, based on a broad decentralization of power and workers' self-management, rather than to state socialism, with its central power of intervention.

In 1918, when the peasants were struggling against the taxation system, Gandhi told them that the struggle for self-management was extremely important in the struggle against imperial power. He stated also that political power was merely a means of organizing national life through national representatives, and that if national life became perfect, to the extent where self-management would be possible, no representative would any longer be necessary. One would then have a state of enlightened anarchy, in which each one would be his own master, acting in such a way as never to trespass against his neighbour. Gandhi was very strict in his condemnation of absolute state power, which he thought annihilated individuality and thereby prevented progress. He hoped that after its accession to independence India would have a

system where power would be in the hands of the masses of the Indian people, thus bringing about an economic and social revolution. This power was to be divided amongst the local and functional communities according to the principle of the broadest possible democracy. But for Gandhi democracy did not imply the introduction of western parliamentary institutions, a system for which he did not have any particular enthusiasm.

The whole gandhian system was based on a broad village autonomy principle. Each village was to elect its representatives to the village council, which in turn would elect its representative to the State Assembly. The Central Parliament would then be made up of representatives elected by the State Assemblies. According to Gandhi, the indirect electoral system does not correspond to the conditions prevailing in India, since it does not allow most of the electorate personally to know the candidate. The system he had in mind was based on the concept that power had to stem from the people and the whole structure of the social, political and economic system to be built from the base to the top and not imposed by some sort of a summit which would usurp its rights. Gandhi emphasized the need for the direct participation of the people in the organs of power, with a liaison running along the whole order of the political family, from the rural community to the Central Parliament. It was
 Gandhi who first formulated what we today call the

system of direct democracy. Of all existing forms of social organization, the closest expression of the gandhian system is to be found in the Yugoslav system of self-management and representation within the republic and the federation through the method of indirect election.

Another concept of Gandhi, which is close to the political views in Yugoslavia, is the concept of full national independence in international relations. Gandhi, however, believed that this independence could be assured only through a firm respect for the principle of nonviolence. 'Nonviolence is an instrument', he has said, 'whereas full independence is the aim'. An international society, he thought, would be created when all nations, great or small, would be fully independent. The nature of this independence would correspond to the extent or degree of nonviolence adopted by these nations. What is certain is that in an international society based on nonviolence, the smallest nation would feel as great as the greatest powers. The idea of superiority and inferiority would then be completely obsolete. Therefore, it is not by chance that India has adopted in international relations the policy of non-alignment, which has as its main goal the struggle against recourse to force in the formal acceptance of the independence and equality of all countries, irrespective of their strength and size.

Even the technique of nonviolent resistance which Gandhi used in the non-cooperation movement is

being practised widely in today's world. Hunger strikes have become widespread among individuals as a form of resistance against the application of force by the strong upon the weak. Other forms of nonviolent resistance, like the boycott of certain public functions, stoppage of work without leaving the place of work, and peaceful meetings, have become increasingly widespread as an instrument of political struggle today. The solidarity of a large part of the population in such nonviolent struggles has led to their being an instrument of struggle far more effective than the application of force. This gandhian tactic is becoming increasingly important at a time when Government leaders are having more and more sophisticated methods of repression at their disposal. We know how the Negroes in the United States have used the gandhian method of satyagraha as the basic instrument of their struggle. Martin Luther King, who marched in the footsteps of Gandhi, considered the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Gandhi the only hope and method for an oppressed people in its fight for freedom.

During his time the ideas of Gandhi were so new, so original and so different from the official viewpoints on the methods and goals of political struggle that very few believed in their practical effectiveness. This had to stand the test of application. The increasing danger of violence had to acquire new and absurd dimensions for this prophet of nonviolence to appear in his true grandeur. The new

and powerful methods of destruction inherent in the nuclear stockpiles of the great powers have made the threat of their use a factor which makes international cooperation more difficult. Many of the hotbeds of conflict in the world have shown that the powers concerned based their various plans on the use of and recourse to violence. The murder of the American Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the assassination of the two Kennedys and other similar events have convinced us that violence has begun to acquire important proportions in many current events. That is why the gandhian teaching concerning the increasing threat of violent methods is particularly timely today.

The economic inequality between different parts of the world is increasing. The racist regime in South Africa, which has been condemned by the overwhelming majority of humanity, continues to pursue its shameful policy of discrimination. It is only today that we can truly appreciate the vision and foresight of Gandhi when he warned us of the threat that these inequalities and injustices hold for the progress of humanity. Therefore, the great revolutionary task of Gandhi is not finished. It calls for new efforts for humanity to be rid of fear and hatred and for men to be re-educated in the use of nonviolence, so that society may be reformed on the basis of the principles of equality and freedom.

Gandhi did not have the academic ambition of creating a general theory of social development. He

was rather an educator and an active militant fighter for the freedom of the people. His basic concern had to do with practical action and not with intellectual creation. Nevertheless, he knew well the environment in which man lived. He knew how to discern the Indian reality and all its components, and he could do this much better than other politicians and thinkers. Looking at truth, he drew practical conclusions concerning the content and method of his political action, which on account of their interest and importance go far beyond the needs of any specific environment and acquire a truly universal value. This is the reason why Gandhi's contribution to a better understanding of society and towards giving a more humane content to individual and social relations is a precious treasure of wisdom which will inspire all sincere people striving for equality and justice in the world for many years to come.

Romesh Thapar

I think it will be broadly agreed that Gandhi today has wider influence than when he lived with the Indian people. As Professor Uvalic has explained to us, his ideas have crossed the many frontiers of our sadly divided world and are now enriching the techniques by which man either proceeds to assault the last vestiges of oppression or makes clear that he is master of his political, economic and social

situation. In this connection we should remember a major fact of our time—a fact against which we must consider truth and nonviolence constantly—namely, the incredible advance of science and technology, which in its sweep has taken man to the moon and in the process shrunk this world of ours. Distances have rapidly ceased to have meaning and as the age of mass travel takes shape the full impact of this fact upon the consciousness of man will begin to be appreciated. For the first time, I believe, the phrase 'family of man' has valid meaning. Already one can discern a new humanism percolating into the consciousness of man. I use the word consciousness repeatedly because I believe it is the base of Gandhi's whole faith in truth and nonviolence. The black and the white, the brown and the yellow have many psychological barriers to overcome, and battles will be fought to force these changes. But it is clear that the family of man and its collective conscience are at last in the making. If this assertion of man, of the growth of the new human family and the new humanism is accepted, it follows very naturally that truth and nonviolence, whether perceived in Hindu or in Christian terms, will play an increasingly positive role in our affairs as concepts to be developed and built upon.

Admittedly, a great deal of confusion will persist on the interpretation of these terms. After all, to many truth is absolute and nonviolence is meaningless when violence is willed upon oneself, as

in Gandhi's satyagraha. There will be variations on the gandhian theme. Indeed it will even be argued that guerrilla action is controlled violence and to be preferred to a head-on collision. Whatever the argument, there will be broad agreement that in a shrinking world where various peoples are coming closer together in mutual respect and understanding, the techniques of nonviolent struggle will be more relevant than those of traditional violence.

Confrontations disciplined by nonviolence create, in the setting of a scientific and technological world which is capable of destroying itself in a single violent exchange, a base of mass commitment and involvement which can seldom be matched by the system behind violent confrontations. This mass commitment and involvement restores to ordinary men and women the right of individual and collective power, of individual and collective sovereignty. Thus it becomes an engine of progress and social transformation. Ironically, the gandhian techniques of struggle become inspirational, because the forward thrust of science and technology creates an antipathy to democratic functioning in those who lead this thrust—the elite of this world—and democracy begins to be seen as something irrational. The dangers inherent in the concentration of power in the hands of the technologically and scientifically skilled will soon be on the agenda of the human race. Mass commitments and involvements generated by the passion and courage

inherent in nonviolent confrontations will provide a major corrective to any authoritarianism parading as the ultimate truth. It is for this reason that gandhian notions on the decentralization of power need to be more fully grasped.

We have had a very sensitive explanation, of how some of these experiments have been applied in Yugoslavia, from Professor Uvalic. The assumption that these notions are rooted in some kind of anarchist perspectives is unfair to one who was deeply disturbed by the fate of man in this very exciting and traumatic century. Obviously, decentralization would condition the shape of the base of society as well as its superstructure. The emphasis would be on simple living and communal enjoyment, the only real weapons of the urban and rural proletariat against the elite, who are wedded to a wasteful, irrelevant and personalized standard of living. This, again, is an extremely important end-product of the influence of gandhian thought throughout the world.

Gandhi was convinced that any concentration of power in our scientific and technocratic world would serve only the elitist interests, polarize peoples, destroy the humanistic content of living and unleash violence of a kind hitherto unknown. He was groping towards a total and comprehensive view of man's condition and the framework within which this condition could be made healthy and purposeful.

We must, in other words, bring the detachment of nonviolent truth to the study of Gandhi. Only then will we be able to sublimate the essence of his life and practice and draw valid lessons for the struggle against injustice and war today. Artificial continuance should not be sought, nor should dogmas be paraded as inviolable. Gandhi was rooted in the life around him. His thought and practice was for ever tested against real problems. His mind was never closed. Small wonder then that the complexities of his moves baffled even those who were very close to him, and baffled them always.

Paul Power

When I was discussing the origins of Gandhi's civil disobedience method in South Africa, I had said that Gandhi concentrated on his own community, the Indian minority in Transvaal, and that he did not take up the broader question of the social and political disabilities of the Africans. My reason for bringing this up—the restricted circle or compass for Gandhi's activities—was to suggest that there was a difference between the historical record of what Gandhi said and did in his own time and the inspiration which Gandhi has given to so many people after his time. What I am suggesting is that even in Gandhi's own career we have to come up against a historical record and accept it for what it is. When I say this, I am not suggesting in any way

that in the specific case of Africa Gandhi's inspiration was not picked up and carried on. Kenneth Kaunda and John Luthuli were inspired by Gandhi in so far as the ending of imperialism in black Africa was concerned. In my own country, besides Dr King, whose passing is a great loss to the nonviolent struggle for racial and social justice, there are others, such as Bayard Rustin, who have been carrying on this particular approach. Of course, the nonviolent approach has met with competition, as we all know, not only in my country but elsewhere.

There was an exchange on the question whether it is permissible to invoke Gandhi's name and values for causes and objectives taken up after his lifetime, when no one knows exactly what he would have said about these controversies. The crux of the issue here seems to be this: What are the ground rules, the criteria, for invoking Gandhi's name and values subsequent to his own career? On this very complex matter I have only a few suggestions to offer. The first is that in order to invoke Gandhi's name and his philosophy we must ask: Is physical coercion involved? Certainly if physical coercion is involved, it would seem that the gandhian spirit is not present. The second criterion would be: Is there a distinction made between the opponent and the evil, which is said to be unjust and must be remedied? Gandhi, as we all know, made this crucial distinction between the opponent and the evil itself,

A third criterion would be: Is there a free expression of ideas? Do we have a competition of intellectual forces? As was said earlier by Professor Uvalic, Gandhi was not a strong believer in parliamentary government in the formal sense. None the less, it does seem to me that he supports what in my country would be called the First Amendment, the kind of freedom of expression which was demonstrated in the moratorium concerning Vietnam just a few days ago. Certainly, there must be this free expression of political ideas, even as the grievances are being processed. It is not just a preliminary matter; it has to go all the way through. It seems to me that Gandhi, especially in his career in the Congress Party, demonstrated this belief in the freedom of expression.

Having offered these three guidelines to help untangle the problem of when gandhian values can be invoked, I would simply say that a possible way out of the many issues that come up is to think of Gandhi in symbolic terms. There are, I agree, many difficulties, from a political or psychological viewpoint, in adopting symbolism as a way of saying that this is the method, this is the approach for perpetuating values, for perpetuating things that are true. But if we do adopt this approach, I would suggest that there are about four symbols that might be kept in mind. One is the symbol of Gandhi as the witness for the idea of the sacred; and this, it seems

 to me, is manifested in the norm or value of

ahimsa, nonviolence. The second symbolic matter concerns the pressing need to correct the conditions of poverty in the world. A third symbolic matter concerns the question of self-reliance in personal, social and national terms, self-reliance beginning with the individual and proceeding through the social group to the state itself. The fourth symbol that Gandhi stands for in our time is self-disciplined nationalism. To be sure, as Erik Erikson has said, he was a universal man; to be sure, he was a great moralist and teacher; but I think we must not lose sight of his symbolic value as a self-disciplined nationalist, as a great champion of self-determination. If this symbolic approach to Gandhi is employed, we might perhaps avoid some of the difficulties that come up when his image is invoked.

Fuad Bustany

I should like to make two points. My first point is a linguistic or etymological comment which should help us to understand more thoroughly the meaning of Gandhi's truth. It is an idea derived from mystical Sufism, which is doctrinally not too far from Hindu asceticism in certain respects. We have in Arabic the advantage of two words for expressing truth—al-haqika and al-haq. Al-haqika is truth in the usual sense, scientific truth, historical truth, the quality of being in conformity with reality. Al-haq is truth with an element of justice, of

straightforwardness, of rectitude. Therefore, al-haq is an attribute of God, a divine name; al-haq subhanahu and abd-ul-haq mean a slave of truth. The attribution of this truth to God led to Al-Hallaj, one of the great Sufis, in estasy identifying himself with God: 'I am God, I am the truth, the way and the light'. This dynamic, living truth, which can be incarnated in a person for shedding light on the world, frees men from bondage. Through al-haq you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.

My second point is slightly different. I should like to ask, what is the value of Gandhi's message in the present-day world where political, ideological and racial violence is leading to a tragic climate affecting human fate? The irony of fate is that this violence is being practised in the very country where the admirable pioneer of ahimsa was once the master. Is this a failure inflicted upon the humanism which was so patiently and valiantly elaborated by Gandhi? First of all, of course, we should say how difficult it is to practise ahimsa. Gandhi mentions this repeatedly in his autobiography and confesses his personal failures. 'I am an incompetent master of nonviolence', he writes. Nonviolence requires superhuman strength and the solitary practice that only the initiated can accept. It is difficult to love without gnosis. To reach the state of satyagraha, one must practise asceticism of an exemplary kind, with an unfailing will. That is why satyagraha is not universally applicable. It will remain the privilege of

a few isolated, solitary persons who are capable of this degree of will power which would shatter regimes and impose an idea. The diffusion of ahimsa, the practice of ahimsa on a broad scale, seems difficult to envisage even in India, where the tradition is strong and the masses enjoy political self-determination. In Europe not only is the tradition absent but the masses are exploited through all the organized means and channels. They can be delivered only through ahimsa, but this might call for millennia.

Western Europe seems to be characterized by a will towards power, which affirms itself as a biological force defying the laws of evolution. The struggle for life leads to the strategy of violence which assumes the many phases we are familiar with and which has as its supreme form the atom bomb. But even at this sophisticated stage the technique of violence does not despair Gandhi, who writes: 'I am sure that after an orgy of violence the people will learn a lesson in nonviolence.'[38] In fact, the supreme irony of fate is that, faced with atomic violence, man does not know what other violence he could use against it. If violence is to answer violence, where will violence end? Therefore, we are compelled to admit that even if ahimsa is based on a negative valuation it is the only possibility for peace, violence having become a weapon of total annihilation. This is why anger can be overcome only by love.

Although the gandhian message is to be found in a specific historical context in India, faced with a special adversary—the British—its value still remains whole and its practice urgent. Only the confronting of nonviolence against violence will reveal the absurdity of violence. Only nonviolence will lead man to overcome his biological condition. The irreducible dignity of man is to be had at this price. This is the message of the gandhian experience. Peace should come through a dialogue which recognizes the primacy of man. The resolution of political tension, eagerly awaited by a humanity faced with mass destruction, can only come from a teaching proclaiming the primacy of man. This is how active ahimsa or caritas, which is the basis of any humanism, remains our one key for true peace.

Arne Naess

Those who, like me, live in a small country risk invasion by a hostile or a friendly neighbour. The occupation may last a day or a century, we cannot know. The relevance of Gandhi in such a situation is clear. He taught active nonviolence in the face of an invasion. As long as the Government and the majority of the population believe in the morality or efficacy of a violent answer to an invasion, we who do not share the belief have the duty to inform our military leaders of our intention to take up

satyagraha in case of invasion and occupation. In a country like Norway it is not difficult to get in touch with military leaders nor too difficult to make them understand the position of Gandhi as we see it. So even if there cannot be any direct cooperation between the relatively small group of satyagrahis and the military leaders, there are possibilities of a certain degree of non-interference and a certain margin of peaceful coexistence.

It is clear that such a radical pluralism in peace is difficult to implement and, of course, still more difficult under invasion and occupation. But the gandhian approach is today so well known and so respected in some small countries that the satyagrahis are not identified as traitors and the Government will try seriously to avoid their large-scale imprisonment or execution. At least one of the authoritative interpretations of Gandhi, we may agree, is that he points to an active, non-military answer to invasion and occupation as the only morally justifiable way that has any hope of success.

From my experience during the occupation of my country by Hitler's Germany, I would say that the basic concern of education for satyagraha is the kindling of a deep self-respect in each individual. Those democratic institutions which depend on the possibility of meetings of more than (say) four people may be eliminated completely by an

 occupying force. But the source of these institutions

is self-respect and, if that is still there, a life in dignity is possible and democratic political institutions can be restored without too much difficulty.

Ravan Farhadi

When I said that Gandhi is no longer amongst us, I meant that unfortunately the world is not following Gandhi. I expressed regret over the fact that Gandhi is not followed and that there is a deplorable trend towards Neo-Gandhism. The ideal, of course, would be for him to be followed; this is what many around this table yearn for. But, unfortunately, those who hold power in their hands, those who have the inter-continental ballistic missiles, they do not follow Gandhi. If they are not pressing the button, it is because they do assess the consequences of the chain reaction, and not because they are disciples of Gandhi.

Jeanne Hersch

Mr Noel-Baker has said that great men never die. I completely agree with him in a certain way; no doubt, great men never die. But I do think that if great men are alive, you can as little use them as you can use living people for what *you* consider to be the right cause. And their passivity, as being

dead, prevents us from using them for our purposes

still more.

We should distinguish between two kinds of questions when we examine Gandhi's influence. One relates to the presence of Gandhi among us as one of these great men who never die. The other is that of the particular points in his teaching which are considered separately from his presence among us—to the extent that this can be done, and we have seen that this cannot be done without profoundly modifying his thoughts. But these points of doctrine exist.

In studying Gandhi, we refer to ideas like nonviolence, truth, etc. and then deal with certain specific points of doctrine and see their topicality or lack thereof and their applicability to the problems of today. This is essentially what he has demanded of us. And his demands, to the extent that he is a great living influence amidst us, follow those of all other great men: that is to say, they do not produce solutions that are directly applicable to the problems of today, but rather they direct to each and every one of us, individually, a kind of appeal, the awakening of an awareness, urging us on to a certain aspiration or to a certain form of disquiet or even remorse. In a word, Gandhi is amongst us, or he should be; he belongs to every one of us, whether he is among us or not. You do not generally perceive this kind of presence; you create it, when you want to create it.

Now there is the other sort of question: the

effectiveness or efficiency, in the present situation or situations, of the technique—in the external sense of the word—of nonviolence; or the applicability to development of, for instance, everything that the spinning wheel stood for in Gandhi's time; or the applicability in the world of today of this indissoluble link he had established between truth and nonviolence. These are some of the questions which are very precise and concrete and which can be illustrated by the events of our collective daily life.

For example, I think there is in Gandhi's life and work a fundamental challenging of the way in which we are functioning—and when I say 'we', I mean the international organizations that we are all serving and which are trying to bring about the reign of nonviolence. It is obviously not gandhian nonviolence, because it is not indissolubly linked to truth. It is a nonviolence which implies much silence, indeed in many cases a lie. This silence and this lie may well be necessary, but they have to be looked at in the eye as such; and this I think is the only way in which it would be possible for us—so far as it is feasible to do so—to remain faithful to Gandhi.

Lastly, I think Gandhi is among us because he helps us in retaining the feeling that the history of our time has a meaning; that *everything has a meaning,* not because one sees that it has, but because one believes that it *must* have, a meaning.

There has to be a meaning in everything if man is to bring about this almost impossible synthesis between truth and nonviolence.

Lanza del Vasto

I have been stimulated by what Professor Karsz has said, that it is not so much in our words and in our scholarly exchanges that we will decide whether or not Gandhi is alive in us, but rather in every act of our lives outside this area of reflection.

When I felt called upon to return to Europe and not to remain in India to work at Indian unity under the shadow of the master, what I brought back with me was essentially the great lesson that Gandhi gave me, the unity of life. This is what I tried to bring out in me, something that is unfortunately so very foreign to us. We have several lives: we have a private life, an emotional life, a religious life, an intellectual life and a professional life. We do not have the unity of life which binds up our smallest actions to the overriding principle that everything should have a certain direction and be strung together coherently.

What brought me back to Europe was the desire to create a gandhian order in Europe and, if possible, an army of the nonviolent. This was my ambition and, of course, I was very young. Well, this order eventually was created, but not without tremendous difficulties. In the end we had a few communities

which, by and large, resemble gandhian ashrams, although we do not copy Indian mores in every single respect. We live rather like our own peasants of yesteryear.

The first thing that we have reinstated is the spinning wheel, which was also the instrument of our forefathers. The economic system of gandhian India is something that we have tried to apply in all its aspects, in spite of the mockery and sniggerings of even our best friends who, witnessing this peasant economy in the middle of the atomic era as a kind of challenge to what is usually described as commonsense, were telling us that we were going to go bankrupt in the very near future. But we did not, as a matter of fact, give them this particular pleasure. Not that they would have been delighted to see us become bankrupt, but they would certainly have been delighted to be able to say, 'Well, we told you so'. So our economy not only provided all our basic requirements, food and clothing and housing, all with the two hands that God and nature have given us, but completely resolved the problem of the duality of employer and employed. We thus did away with the appalling problem of the salaried worker, who is always looking for better salaries and better working conditions, by rejecting the notion itself, which is nothing but slavery in a modern form. Never pay anybody and don't be paid by anyone—this is the first basis. Supply your
 main requirements yourself. As for non-essentials,

do without them!

The gandhian community admits as members only people who renounce the possession of goods or property. Even one's personal belongings one should give away to someone else who needs them. The same work for everybody, including the leaders. All the work, including scavenging, is part of the chief's duties also, and no one did it for him.

Now, to take the wool from the sheep and to weave your cloth and sew it, all these are operations which, if you do them quietly, may take up to a fortnight. My clothes take two weeks to make and I shall wear them for 15 years—and they are not as bad as all that, you see. So it is not an operation which economically is a bad proposition at all. Besides, after doing all this, we still have a great deal of free time for a number of other activities. I would like to say that not only am I glad to wear this particular piece of cloth which my wife's and daughters' hands have been working at, but I am demonstrating thereby that the necessity for these enormous textile mills and the appalling and insoluble social problems that they give rise to are a lie.

The very first kind of work that we have to do in this gandhian ashram is the work on oneself. Our rules enforce on us some hours of meditation a day, exchanges on religious writings and scriptures, and prayers in common; and, in addition, eight hours of work a day, which is 'both healthy and rather

amusing', as Tolstoy used to say. While you work you do not get into mischief and, indeed, you do not think about mischief since you have other things to do.

These rules, may I say, shed an interesting light on the nonviolent doctrine. Take this problem of labour and work. All strong and civilized people find a way to get rid of work, putting other people to work and collecting the profit therefrom. So there is no need for me to insist on the profoundly revolutionary character of voluntary manual work and the extent to which it has been inspired directly by Gandhi.

The lack of balance between freedom and authority has affected all political regimes. How to have a life that is orderly, with therefore people who give orders, and how to safeguard freedom at the same time—this is the problem. How can we so regulate ourselves that power should not always have the power to abuse power? In our community, as I have said, the chief himself is compelled to do all the lower, menial kinds of work as well.

All important decisions in our community are taken unanimously, not by majority. We do not believe in majorities. There is no reason why a larger number should be right against a smaller number or even against one man. Now, obviously to get unanimity on even the slightest project is a difficult thing to achieve, and there are many delays; nevertheless, the time that is taken up in achieving unanimity is

not time lost.

The chief has, in fact, very little to do. He has to see to it that what has been decided by the community will be done by certain persons and at a certain time. He is a band leader, so to speak. The music itself has been written and all he has to do is to see to it that it is played. The role of the nonviolent leader is, I think, an important one: it is to bring about conciliation. If the leader is good, there is no quarrel and there is no misunderstanding. The best of all leaders is the one whose work is hardly noticed except when he is not there, and that is when you notice that something very important is lacking. When between 50 and 100 persons live together, you may well imagine that there are quarrels among them. The chief must be able to forestall them before they occur. If a quarrel has broken out, there is also the possibility of resolving it by nonviolence, fasting and dialogue. In any case, we do not want the sun to set on this quarrel, because in the evening we all give one another the kiss of peace. If a quarrel were to persist and to worsen, then the wheel of the community would cease to turn—without prayers, without the kiss of peace, without sleeping, without working. The presence of this great pressure softens the toughest fibre and the most deep-set rancour is eventually resolved.

Another source of violence is the cry for justice and punishment. Punishment is founded on the

extraordinary reasoning that one evil is corrected by another evil, and that any evil is stopped by retribution or by contrary evils; and, of course, the tooth-for-a-tooth and eye-for-an-eye philosophy, thanks to which we will all eventually be blind, as Martin Luther King said. So let us stop this particular kind of justice. No one has the right to inflict on anyone else the slightest retribution or punishment; no one is pure enough for that. And let us remember that not only punishment but even a judgement, as it is said in the Scripture, is a violence. We must refrain from even that. This does not mean that we should not use our judgement on acts. But we should not say that the evil-doer himself is evil and must be done away with, or put in fetters, or thrown out. No: he is a man as I am; the spirit of justice is in him as it is in me.

Nonviolent justice, in other words, is justice without punishment. It may be argued, of course, that this is impossible. If we believe, as a number of young people and communities believe, that one should allow everything to happen, then anything is going to happen and, obviously, these communities will not last. But is there such a thing as nonviolent punishment? We describe it as penance. The difference between penance and punishment is that while punishment is inflicted upon one by virtue of somebody else's judgement, penance is the result of one's own judgement and is inflicted on oneself.

 Who is superior—he who judges or he who is

judged? Obviously, he who judges. Consequently, judging that I have acted wrongly, I overcome myself and cut myself adrift from this evil, which a punishment will not achieve.

You might ask me, what do I do if my brother is at fault? Do I denounce him to the chief or to the tribunal of the community? Nothing of the kind. I simply ask him what he intends to do in order to make amends. And if he tells me, 'I will fast for so many days or crave forgiveness from the one I have hurt'—and if it is considered that this is enough, then the incident will be closed. But he has every right to send me packing. It may well happen that someone is obstinate and refuses to admit his fault. In that case the whole community would bear the responsibility for it, fasting and giving the guilty party a meal. It never happened, but I am sure this solitary meal would have a very bad taste and would be very difficult to digest!

Yasuaki Nara

Religion is a dynamic synthesis which helps in discovering the reality of man on the plane of our daily lives. The reality of man in the universe, however, can be understood in diverse ways. As I briefly outlined earlier, we approach reality and discover it in the form of truth. Christianity grasps it in the form of God, if I correctly understand Christianity. Hinduism directly approaches reality to

emphasize the truth of brahman. Buddhism sees reality through the law of causation. Whatever the approach might be, they all aim at the universal truth as long as they are deeply rooted in reality. Each of the religions preaches how to practise the truth and to find a way of life in which a man can live as a man. In this sense, all religious truths are not necessarily inconsistent with one another. There is no need to fight with other religions in order to insist on one's own religious truth. Religious tolerance, which is characteristic of almost all religions in Asia, finds its ground in this dual nature of truth.

I have no doubt that Gandhi inherited this tradition of Hinduism or, more correctly, of the East.. The love of God is universal to all human beings, regardless of the differences in their religious backgrounds. Gandhi might have readily accepted the Christian God, or the Islamic Allah or the Buddha. In fact, when a Japanese Buddhist priest, the well-known pacifist, Reverend Fuji, was living with him in his ashram at Sevagram, Gandhi felt no contradiction in worshipping and praying to the Buddha, according to the Buddhistic way, while the Buddhist priest joined in the Hindu prayer. The differences between religions, such as between Hinduism and Islam, did not have any important meaning for Gandhi. He found a wonderful way of practising this truth—what he called nonviolence.

I have discussed tolerance in Gandhi from the

viewpoint of religion. But if you do not like the word religion, you may call it the realization of humanism or the materialization of liberty, equality and peace. But what is important is to recover humanity, so that the present-day injustices and impediments to freedom are removed. And for that purpose, the nonviolence of Gandhi must be re-evaluated in the context of the modern world.

Gandhi prescribed spiritual and moral disciplines, such as self-control, silence and simplicity as the basis of nonviolence. It may be asked whether these moral disciplines are really essential for the practice of nonviolence. Take, for example, brahmacharya, an Indian word meaning discipline. Brahmacharya is sometimes translated as asceticism, but I think it is just a discipline. The meaning of brahmacharya has been posed in our Working Document, but so far we have discussed it only sporadically. I would look upon brahmacharya as the practice of nonviolence or human truth at the level of our private lives, whereas satyagraha is the same activity at the socio-political level. The disciplines which Gandhi had recommended, like self-control, demanding of oneself more than one demands of others, rejecting the evil but respecting the person of the evil-doer, respect for liberty and equality, cultivation of perfect love towards others, and so on, should be so practised as to penetrate into each individual and to become part of his nature.

 Otherwise nonviolence would lose its driving force

and remain a mere slogan. I believe that not one of the so-called gandhian disciplines is without reason. It may be asked whether these disciplines are not common, more or less, to many religions in the world. All preach them, though with a slightly different degree of emphasis. Conversely, any religion which has its roots in the depths of human reality is bound to recommend them.

On the basis of these universally accepted disciplines, is it not possible for each one of us to re-evaluate his own religion, respect the truth of other religions and have ultimately a dialogue with them, so that more and more people can share the same understanding of human liberty, equality, love and distaste for violence? Is it not necessary to seek and rediscover the real meaning of man; and on this basis, is it not imperative to develop a practical anti-violent campaign on a world-wide scale and at the same time take one step forward to promote the dialogue? Can Unesco not take the initiative for such a movement?

Prem Purachatra

We have all benefited from the animated dialogue that has been taking place in this hall during the past three days. But it would be a pity if, as Professor Nara has just mentioned, Unesco is not able to translate all this into some practical form of
 action. There is then the question of the teaching of

gandhian principles in schools and universities. I submit that not enough is being done in this line at all. In India possibly this is being done. Mr Ramachandran tells me that in Gandhigram there are arrangements for the study of gandhian principles in depth. This is very admirable and very necessary. But outside India, I fear that not enough is being done. Although schools and universities have on their curricula many other subjects, some of them no doubt of great importance, yet the gandhian concepts and principles are largely ignored or glossed over. At present in some of the political science faculties, of course, gandhian studies are being made, but I think these studies could be extended. Would it not be possible for Unesco to take action in this respect and urge member nations to do more?

Another field is in the writing of history. As is well known, Unesco has used its great and beneficent influence in urging historians to revise their methods of writing history. In earlier generations, history books laid very great emphasis on movements in history which were the results of war and human conflicts. Why should not there be as much emphasis on the great movements of peace and great movements like the gandhian movement towards nonviolence? Could the future historians not pay more attention to the gandhian concepts of nonviolence and stress this more in their history books?

Anibal del Campo

Our intention is to make use of the authority and prestige of the persons assembled here so as to make it possible for resolutions to be adopted at the next session of the Unesco General Conference, with a view to setting up what we have called the International Gandhi Foundation. The text of our proposal is as follows:

> This Symposium on 'Truth and Nonviolence in Gandhi's Humanism' wishes to express its aspiration that there could be founded in Paris, under the auspices of Unesco and the Indian National Commission and with the support of the first mentioned and of the states, private persons and institutions that wish to cooperate, the 'International Gandhi Foundation'. Its ends will be:
>
> 1. To organize and promote studies and research on Gandhi's life, work and thought and on his influence over the historical and social reality of his people and the present world.
> 2. To organize and promote studies and research on the influence of nonviolent action and of the ethical forces over the historical process and social and political action in general.
> 3. To organize and promote studies and research on the personalities engaged in nonviolent action.

4. To promote studies on the ethical elements of the legal phenomenon and most especially on the relations between the moral elements, the consent of the people and the efficiency and real force of national and international law.

5. To publish annually a Gandhi Year Book with reference to the Foundation's activities and the studies and researches accomplished under its patronage.

6. To integrate a Gandhi library and archives covering all the objects of its activities.

Direction: A committee of five members of different nationalities, and a Director, as permanent secretary.

With regard to one of the proposals of Prince Purachatra, I would refer to the Unesco program of international understanding with which educational institutions are associated (the associated schools program). In this program, the main subject matter is not only the teaching of mutual understanding between nations but certain specific activities such as the problem of human rights and the problems of the United Nations. Therefore, I do not see why one could not include in the program the subject of nonviolence as a mode of action. In this sense I would formulate, expressly, a proposal or recommendation.

William Eteki-Mboumoua

Unesco convenes an enormous number of symposiums on great men, and if every time we have a symposium a foundation is set up, we will have so many foundations that they would lose all effectiveness. Nevertheless, I think one could promote the development of studies on gandhian thought not only in the existing institutions but, as has been suggested, within the Unesco program for international understanding. And, of course, there is no reason why one of the member states at the General Conference of Unesco should not sponsor a resolution.

I do not know if we can draw any conclusions about the importance of the gandhian teaching for the world today. At any rate, I would not like to embark on this dangerous task; but I think one can make three points. First, it has been said that Gandhi did not elaborate a doctrine which could be universally applied. Having striven for an identity with his own people, most of the methods used by Gandhi are first and foremost valid for the people of India.

The second idea is that although his methods are transposable, there are also other countries that have had recourse—whether as a consequence of Gandhi's teaching or by coincidence—to the same principles. We have in certain African countries the principle of village organization. Mention has been

made of the political and economic organization adopted in Yugoslavia which is very reminiscent of gandhian ideas; and of Martin Luther King and his beliefs and actions in the field of achieving equality for the Negroes in America. Therefore, we have many reasons for considering Gandhi as a forerunner, although what he elaborated was basically for India.

A third idea is that the gandhian message, the basis of which is nonviolence or satyagraha, implies at least three symbols.

1. Nonviolence as a means for achieving peace, a means which outshines all others, such as armaments.
2. Nonviolence as a means of bringing out the personality of man, spiritually, morally and intellectually, and of creating a man free from fear and open to solidarity and to the principle of equality among men.
3. And finally, nonviolence as insisting on the primacy of men; and deriving from that, a preference for certain types of institution, certain forms of economic organization and certain forms of democracy.

It was also said that it is up to us to find a content for this gandhian message within the framework of our environment. I think this is a fair summing up of the situation.

G. Ramachandran

Gandhi is not something outside us. The thoughts he thought and the ideas he projected out of himself were not things alien to us. Through countless centuries man has aspired and moved towards a destiny. My faith is strong that nothing in the world can prevent man from moving towards that destiny. And that destiny can be nothing but a united mankind living in conditions of complete justice and freedom and sharing equally in everything. The human race has encountered through its chequered history innumerable catastrophes but not one of them has pulled man down into the dust altogether. Again and again he has risen out of the dust and the mire of things and marched on to a new destiny. It is to this mighty adventure of the human spirit that Gandhi beckons us—not as a leader but as a comrade linking hands with every man and woman.

Some of us are apt to think that because of quick communications and the possibility of transport with a swiftness which nobody would have imagined a few years ago, the world has shrunk. This is an illusion which can sometimes take us in the wrong direction. The world is much too big. There are in it over two thousand million human beings and innumerable religious systems, ideologies and languages. In such a terrifically complex world it would be absurd for anyone to think that some

ideology, some idea, or some concept would be wholly acceptable to all mankind. For a long time to come, we must reckon with the coexistence of different ideas and systems of thinking. The whole world has not accepted even the idea of Godhood totally. It is not going to accept any particular concept of truth totally. Shades of truth, tones of truth, will continue to move the minds of men. I am not saying that nothing can unite us. But we must be realists. To posit a future except on the basis of the hard ground of reality is to walk on a shaky floor. Let us keep this limitation in mind.

Somebody once or twice used the word Gandhism. I want to say with all the emphasis I can command that there is no 'ism' called Gandhism. One person who said that there ought not to be a Gandhism is Gandhi himself. I remember one of the things he told us: 'As long as I am alive, you will all run to me, ask me about this, ask me about that; I will tell you what I have in mind. You will argue with me, accept something, reject something. But when I go away, let there be nothing that guides you except the light of reason in your own soul.' He did not want anybody to follow him. Gandhi followed nobody. Did Gandhi conform to the teachings of earlier prophets and teachers of the world? He took from each one of them what in his pragmatic spirituality he thought was necessary, integrated it into himself and did astonishingly new things. If

 Gandhi is going to make all of us his followers,

God save Gandhi, God save the followers, and God save the world. We must make use of Gandhi in the same way as Gandhi made use of every other teacher of the past. We must then put his ideas and thoughts into the alchemy of our own souls, transmute them into a new goal and march on, leaving even Gandhi behind. To put him always in front of us and ourselves ever behind him would be to misunderstand Gandhi completely. He himself experimented with nothing less than truth. His challenge to all of us is to be experimenters ourselves.

The question whether Gandhi is alive or dead seems to me an unnecessary dispute. Nothing great dies. It might lie low or be pushed away by the contrary forces of history for a time, but it will come back. You might throw a thing into the ground and bury it ten fathoms deep, but some day the rains of history, the manure and tillage of history, will bring that thing up again in the most unexpected manner. The question is not whether Gandhi is dead or alive but whether he embodied in himself some of the deepest aspirations of man. Having embodied these ideas and dreams and aspirations in himself, did he open up a path along which he could challenge us to move forward farther than he went? One of the finest things Gandhi ever said was that no guru is worth his name if he does not produce at least one disciple greater than himself. It is not that I am saying that we will become greater than Gandhi.

We cannot become Gandhi. To want to imitate Gandhi would be astounding nonsense. It is not imitation that we must seek, but the creative realization of what he stood for.

Would anybody amongst us dare say that a lie is better than the truth? Can there not be total agreement, intellectually and morally, amongst us that to stand for the truth is what the dignity of man demands and that every lie spoken and acted degrades man, pulls him down? This is the first truth that comes from Gandhi: stand by the truth at the cost of everything you hold dear, at the cost of life itself. Let us confirm this truth that has come to us from many great men in history, but in our time from Gandhi, and that in the midst of circumstances of baffling difficulty.

As I have said, for Gandhi action came first and nonviolence next. Nonviolence was the inescapable corollary but the theorem itself was action: that to evade action is to commit moral and spiritual suicide. What kind of action? Action for freedom and justice in society. Can we not then say that the truth to which we give our allegiance demands that we must not tolerate in any manner or garb the enslavement of the human mind or injustice to any human being? This is exactly satyagraha. To grip the truth and to advance towards justice and freedom is satyagraha. No other action but that which directs the whole of the human purpose to freedom and justice. When you have freedom and

justice, like the day following the night, you have prosperity and happiness.

This word satyagraha is, in my opinion, the greatest word of the twentieth century. What does it indicate in terms of history? Before Gandhi appeared on the arena of modern history, we had all accepted it as imperative that the weak must surrender to the strong or perish. Weak and strong in what way? In physical might. The physically strong took the physically weak and, under various names and at various times in history, from the time of the Greeks down to our time, enslaved them. The garb of enslavement, the nomenclature, changed from time to time; but always, inevitably, the physically strong held the physically weak in subjection.

In South Africa Gandhi looked at this dreadful picture of slavery. A diabolic system had grown up without parallel in history. It was not merely slavery of the kind that the world already knew. And who were his soldiers? Unlettered coolies. A man who could make the unlettered coolies of South Africa challenge the brutal power of the South African Government would have found a nonviolent remedy even under Hitler. That he happened to be in a particular circumstance of history was not of his choice. It was one of the great accidents of history that he found himself in a certain situation and in that situation he found the remedy. To say that in other circumstances he

would not have succeeded is to talk historical nonsense.

This imperative of history faced him in South Africa. Coolies, indentured labour, which had become slave labour in South Africa, unlettered people who could not even sign their names on their membership forms—he had to marshall these people to fight one of the most diabolic systems of tyranny without parallel in history. What did he achieve? He discovered a weapon with which the weakest can fight the strongest. None could have been weaker than the Indian coolies of South Africa. None could have been in the circumstances more powerful than the armed white government of South Africa, armed not only with weapons but with a philosophy perverting the Bible itself in terms of the new tyranny. After Gandhi discovered this weapon of satyagraha, the old imperative of history disappeared altogether. It is no longer imperative in this world for the weak to surrender or perish. It is now open to the weakest in the world to assume a weapon with which they can fight the strongest, with a sporting chance of success.

When Gandhi came to India and saw the amazing spectacle of 350 millions of people, as we were then, under subjection, many doubted if what was possible in the restricted area of South Africa would be possible in vast India. They told him, 'In South Africa you were a small integrated

community. You could see the face of every man, talk into the heart of every man and you could unite them. But what will you do with this mighty mass of 350 million people? You cannot see them all; you cannot even talk to them all.'. He never used the gadgets of mass communication. Lord Mountbatten, in one of his recent essays on Gandhi, has said that Gandhi discovered a technique of mass communication without parallel in history—without using any of the gadgets. He knew when to pick up an issue. He knew how to present that issue in such a manner that the masses responded to it.

In South Africa, Gandhi had proved that a small, unlettered, poverty-stricken minority could defy the might of a great state armed to the teeth. In India, he set to prove that he could gather together into his fragile hands the power of the will of millions and millions of people. There were no 'schools of nonviolence' into which he sent them for training. His training was in the battle itself. It was in-service training! As he took millions of people step by step onwards, every step was a piece of training to take the next step.

It is not that we should be caught up today with all the details and localisms of Gandhi. About every prophet and teacher, there is a part of the teaching, a part of the work, that history has swept away. There will be similarly a part of Gandhi's life and teaching which will be swept off by history. What

we have to rescue from it is this art and science of the weak being able to fight the strong.

May I end up with a suggestion that some organization, preferably the Unesco, may take steps to establish at a suitable place a Gandhi University of Nonviolence, where the theory, application and disciplines of nonviolence would be studied carefully? If this emerges from our thinking together, here and elsewhere, it could be our gift for the Gandhi centenary. In my conception of this, I am asking you to accept nothing blindfold, accept nothing even from Gandhi, but take his example, put it into the crucible of study, research and experimentation and through it give the world a message of incalculable significance.

Olivier Lacombe

In the course of the first day of our discussions, we had begun by looking at the master's thought and philosophy. While being fully aware of the fact that there was no cause to dissociate his thought from his action, it was unavoidable that for practical purposes this dissociation should take place. We have emphasized the uniqueness of the method invented by Gandhi, which consisted precisely in this that, although as a way of life it was not altogether new, its application to the solution of political and social problems was almost unheard of in the history of the world. As spiritual principles

truth and nonviolence were already known, but their function had so far been that of personal ethics only, that is, to pave the way for individual salvation.

We have also, I think, come to realize that to a certain extent the presence of Gandhi in our contemporary world was a kind of providential retort to the unheard-of upheaval of violence in the human race. I am not thinking so much of the atom bomb. But from the nineteenth century onwards, violence came to be considered by some important thinkers as a privileged tool in the progress of the human race—or such was their theory. Gandhi denounced this tremendous error of our time. The question is not whether we are more violent than our predecessors. From certain standpoints we may be less violent. Our civilization, on certain points, is more sensitive to the harm that we can do to others and to that extent more refined and polished. Our channels of communication make us aware of and sensitive to the evils of a greater part of the human race than before. But what is seriously wrong with us, as I see it, is that violence has now become firmly anchored in theory. Gandhi is the living retort to this exceedingly grave development in the history of mankind. It is true that even in Plato his fictitious adversaries were advocates of violence. But in the nineteenth century we have encountered the problem of the would-be fecundity of violence on a broader scale and with much more

serious implications. In this historical perspective, the figure of Gandhi appears to be not only a symbol but indeed a reality, in that it is an exceptional retort to an altogether novel situation in the long history of violence. We should not therefore be surprised if the message of Gandhi, or of those who want to disengage themselves from violence, is so poorly understood that the first reward that the nonviolent get is a violent, martyr's death—proof of which is given by Gandhi, Martin Luther King and others.

It has also been debated whether Gandhi was a failure. There is no doubt whatever that towards the end of his life, at the tragic moment when independence, of which he was one of the makers, had been secured, this independence was marred by the partition of India. This was failure no doubt; and the violence that went with the partition, which it is necessary to recall, was for Gandhi a second failure. There again there was a retort. While he was compelled to accept the partition, he was able to stem the violence by fasting, offering to stand between the warring factions with his own life. That was not a failure. At all events, whether there was a failure or not—and no doubt there was a partial failure—Gandhi did not die in despair. And that is what is important. He was not in despair himself. He did not give up his mission in despair. Gandhi firmly believed that the satyagrahi

 never fails and is never vanquished: because if he

succeeds in convincing his adversary, he has won; and if he does not succeed and has to die, then again he has won, since thereby he has been able to be a witness to truth, which is the highest possible lot that can fall to anyone.

In the course of the second day, we studied Gandhi's concrete work in South Africa and India. It was indeed indispensable for us to turn our thoughts to Gandhi in the land of his birth, where his action and his thought have been developing together. A man of action does not work in the heavens, unless he is a cosmonaut, but against a background of historical facts in a given country. From certain standpoints one may say that this particular aspect of the work of Gandhi shows a deeper and deeper rooting in Indian civilization. In his younger years, when in London and in South Africa, he was reading Tolstoy, Ruskin or Henry Thoreau. There again he was groping to find himself and his Indian roots. Not that they were absent, but they were in an instinctual state, whereas his effort was to retrieve them in a conscious and voluntary form.

On our last day, today, we have tried to see how the human race of today would respond to Gandhi's message and use it to the best avail. Questions were raised as to whether Gandhi's message is alive or dead. As far as we are concerned, the question is how it would be possible

 for us to give universal scope to the teaching and

example of Gandhi. Well, there is the first task, the one we have carried out ourselves yesterday and today—to understand him as he was and as he has tried to be. There is a second task, which is to convey this to others, attempting not to inflect or distort in any way the meaning of his message and being as objective and understanding and penetrating as possible. This work of disseminating gandhian thought is not propaganda—please do not be mistaken as to the meaning of what I am trying to say. It is a question of communication. I think what we have done here in this symposium is to throw a stone into stagnant water. The ripples from this are going to grow concentrically around the point of impact and, by the thousand and one means which we have available, help to bring Gandhi home to others, to convey his message and to bring about a clearer understanding of what satyagraha may mean.

Here I would like to thank Mr Ramachandran for having insisted on the point that to convey the message of Gandhi does not imply an imitation, a mirror image, of him. I am sure that Gandhi himself would have protested against such an attitude. When it comes to men of action, mirror-image imitation is something which is completely senseless, because action of course takes place against a certain background and there is a radical and irreconcilable difference between certain points of application of a certain doctrine and the different ways in which it can be applied

elsewhere. What we can do is to take up the momentum that he gave to certain movements that he has put in opposition to the violence of our time —a violence which wants to stand on its own right and claim a kind of self-justification.

Gandhi is the man who has, shall we say, created the breach in the system of violence and we are the ones who must follow him and try to go over to the top. Let us, however, be careful that we are not excessively bound up with Gandhi's specific vocabulary. Let us beware, for the word nonviolence is not something that is completely native to western thought. It has to be transposed up to a point. Nonviolence is not only the contrary of violence. It is rather a way to overtake the violence in the hearts of individual men and in human society. For this work, you need pioneers who are wholly dedicated to the cause of Gandhi and who enshrine it in a number of pilot communities, such as the one referred to by Dr Lanza del Vasto. But it goes without saying that this concerns not only pilot communities but all of us in any situation, wherever we may find ourselves. The ideal of nonviolence—an ideal in the fullest sense of the word—is one that is meant to become incarnate. It must be echoed in all situations and find in all circumstances a certain characteristic mode of action.

There are concentric circles in Gandhi's thought
 and everything may not have the same hallmark of

the universal. There are certain proposals by Gandhi which are less universal than others and which have more to do with individual circumstances. For instance, his judgement on industry is derived from the state of industry at a particular time. Supposing industry were to become more humane, it would mean that his judgement on industry will have to be modified.

By way of conclusion, I should like to point out that there is a certain unavoidable pluralism in the application of nonviolence, both in time and space. Nonviolence is not a ready-made device, or an easy way out, but in fact it imposes on everyone who wants to practise it the duty of mapping out new courses and ways of applying it.

Related to this pluralism is the fact that there are other men and institutions throughout the world which are working for social and political peace under different banners. After all, if peace is understood to be a deeper harmony than the mere absence of war, or a precarious balance between opposing states, then everything that converges towards this kind of peace is necessarily consistent with the spirit of Gandhi.

Nadjm Bammate

The man who in France was perhaps the most devoted spokesman of Gandhi, Louis Massignon, has said that the quality of a person's life can be

evaluated only after his death, according to the identity between his deep-founded intentions and their fulfilment in his lifetime. In few lives have the purity of the intention and the determination to achieve the highest ideals been so fully achieved as in Gandhi's case, where the achievement consisted in the supreme sacrifice. What was most universal in Gandhi's message coincided with what was most intimate in his conscience. What was most absolute in his sacrifice has substantiated and confirmed the purest element of his faith and his most personal truth.

Marie-Pierre Herzog

If I were to draw any personal conclusion, it would be to say that Gandhi was a politician who gave a new dimension to politics or who revived the political dimension that Plato, for instance, had always striven for.

Harry Alpert

I had the privilege of first learning of Gandhi's satyagraha, when I was a graduate student of Columbia University many years ago, from a fellow graduate student who had lived and worked with Gandhi, Krishnalal Shridharani. We called him jocularly the Hindu on the Hudson, and it was on
 the Hudson that I had the honour and privilege of

first learning a good deal of what has been said in these three days here.

I want to emphasize that not only is Gandhi the conscience of all mankind on earth but his spirit is even on the moon, because the plaque which the American astronauts left there included the words: 'We came in peace for all mankind'. It seems to me that that is very much in the spirit of Gandhi.

We heard a good deal about the problem of the relationship of thought to action. I wish that a resolution of this problem could be found on the lines of the wise man who said: 'Think like a man of action and act like a man of thought'.

William Eteki-Mboumoua

As my own personal conclusion, I should like to end with two quotations from Gandhi: 'If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are indeed in their essentials for the whole world and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a large and daily-growing number of men and women of the West.'[39] 'The highest honour that my friends can do me is to enforce in their own lives the program that I stand for, or to resist me to their utmost if they do not believe in it.'[40] I think this is a fitting conclusion to our labours.

symposium papers

carlos romulo
sugata dasgupta

Carlos Romulo

To the logical western mind, Gandhi presented a paradox. The Mahatma's involvement in politics happened at a time when the culture of the world was turning, as it were, away from the traditional sources of authority and power towards a more modern concept of human organization. India's movement for independence, as a matter of fact, signified the very modern current of world politics. India's action challenged not simply British rule in India, but imperialism in general.

The members of the Congress Party—the organization that was moving for independence—consisted of some of the modern elements of the country: Maulana Azad, for instance, and Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru was already, at the time, challenging entrenched orthodox assumptions on Indian society. He was a declared atheist, and broke standing practice by conspicuously eating with untouchables.

Amidst this modern circumstance and association, Gandhi stood out. He was a mystic, an exemplar of India's traditional way of life symbolized by the primitive spinning wheel, the loin cloth, and, above all, by his (Gandhi's) adherence to India's philosophy.

Even western sympathizers of India's struggle for independence never ceased to be baffled by the central role Gandhi played in it. Gandhi was an

open rebel while rejecting the use of force, and he was one of the very few fighters in the world —Christ was one of them—who thought he could force the colonial powers into negotiating the independence of India without resort to military force.

These were the aspects of Gandhi that make him baffling and paradoxical as a political figure. I am using my words advisedly because it cannot be denied that Gandhi stands centrally in India's political life. This political role stands out both in the conventional sense—as a leader of the people —and in the modern revolutionary sense: leadership with a 'mass base'. In this regard Gandhi was different from Nehru. Nehru was a bourgeois and an intellectual in the western sense. On the other hand, Gandhi lived with the people, something like a nonviolent guerrilla leader, and when he spoke, he was articulating the thoughts of the masses.

Symbolic of Gandhi's affinity with the masses was his paper, *Harijan*. A western intellectual sympathetic to India's independence, described the *Harijan* as some sort of a 'combined Dorothy Dix and Dorothy Thompson', in which Gandhi offered advice to young maidens on how to avoid being raped as well as recommendations to Churchill, Stalin and Tojo on how to win the war. Sevagram, where Gandhi lived, also offered to a western journalist not so much the squalor of Indian

poverty, as an idyllic scene recalling any orthodox representation of Francis of Assissi. From this community of simple buildings, chickens and cows; scorpions and poisonous snakes; kindly spinners and toilers carrying out the creed of the Mahatma, Gandhi, between prayers, spinning and administering purgatives to relieve the aches of his patients, thought of his last headache for Churchill during the war: open rebellion against the British regime.

What actually made Gandhi perplexing was precisely this: his close affinity with humanity. Indeed, in spite of his appellation as Saint, he was never to forsake the absolutely human aspect of this commitment. It was his humanness, too, that finally was shattered by his assassin; amidst a throng of followers, on his way to a prayer meeting, he was killed by one who confessed not to having felt any guilt for committing the unconscionable and dastardly act. When westerners marvel at Gandhi's politics, they are actually wondering how the element of folk wisdom or philosophy, the logic of nonviolence, and an overwhelming benignity could be a political force.

This is so because in the West politics has mainly proceeded through the logic of force. This is not to reject the fact that philosophical assumptions about the state, about society and about man underlie political decisions and action in western culture.
 But the enforcement of these ethical and moral

precepts in western politics rested mainly on force. To the western consciousness, society is inconceivable without the police, and foreign relations meaningless without military, naval, and air forces to support the terms of treaties.

To say this is not to imply criticism of western politics. It is to note a fact—and perhaps the incursions of a militarized China upon Indian borders would have been the right, albeit unfair, retort to Gandhi's principle of nonviolence. Still, there is in the western mind a tendency to assume that any other form of human organization is impossible besides that which rests on an adequate security represented by the police powers of the state.

Gandhi gave a special political meaning to an aspect of Hindu philosophy: the teaching of ahimsa or non-injury. He fashioned a weapon out of it, in the form of satyagraha, or soul-force. In political practice this becomes 'nonviolent civil disobedience'. This method of struggle was peculiarly suited to the Indian temperament because of the passivity engendered by centuries of subjugation among the Indian masses. This was what made Nehru remark: 'Gandhi has an intuitive understanding of the people that I lack. The people thought as Gandhi did.' Gandhi stated the ethical principle behind his reliance on ahimsa. 'If I could turn India towards nonviolence then I would do so. If I succeed in

 making 400 million people fight with nonviolence

it would be a great gain.'

In his thinking, a nation is distinguished not so much by its capacity for destruction, as by its moral force—the capability to resist enslavement or terror by a tough moral fibre—and by its determination to struggle against odds towards freedom. Thus independence is won through dignity, not by vulgar bullishness.

The fact is that having been colonized and prevented from enjoying the benefits of the Industrial Revolution, Asians have to rely on their spiritual resources, and Gandhi exemplified this reliance on ethical precepts to dramatize what really was a spiritual aspect of politics: the right of a people to dignity and freedom.

But if the distinctive value of Gandhi's politics was its basis in traditional philosophy and folk wisdom alone, his person and his teachings would have little relevance to us. Gandhi was for the preservation of several traditional Indian ways. Even on the appalling caste system of India, he was for its conservation, although for a different reason: as a system of preserving the division of labour. He also hated science as much as he hated the machine, and he especially welcomed anyone who came to get his own personal mud-pack cure for high blood pressure.

However, there was one other important element to Gandhi's political view. It was his idea of *unity*, actually a more complicated concept than is

immediately presented by this Anglo-Saxon word.

Firstly, unity, in Gandhi's sense, was the unity of the Indian nationalist movement. This was a difficult thing to achieve, considering that the Congress Party was constituted of various elements, both in the religious and social class lines. It was also diverse in the political sense, because it embraced the range of political views among the nationalists, from extreme right to extreme left. Gandhi's insistence on unity, however, actually meant, by implication, the national solidarity of India. It meant the oneness of the diverse humanity that India was.

Secondly, the meaning of the term could be derived from Gandhi's attitude towards British imperial rule in India. Gandhi had no hatred for the British as a people. He made little use of the term nationalism in his writings. His participation in the struggle for independence derived from his belief that, as he said in one instance, 'humanity is one, truth is one'. The oneness of this humanity was being divided by the system of colonialism, in which one nation could be enslaved by another.

This must explain the fact that in Gandhi's interest in the nationalist movement, he had little to say about the economic question. The idea of economic exploitation was not central in the protest movement he led. His opposition to imperialism was a moral position, ultimately related to the principle of human fraternity.

The idea of the brotherhood of men is of course an ancient precept. Perhaps it was Gandhi who first, and to such an extent, waged a political struggle based on the idea and, logically, rejected those means, no doubt open to him, which would violate the principle of non-injury. This is also what makes for Gandhi's continuing relevance: the fact that he conceived of a type of politics, not based on the advantage of a nation, nor on the superiority of arms, nor yet on the basis of class struggle. This is the uniqueness of Gandhi's politics and this is ultimately what the world must come to terms with.

Gandhi gave the idea of the brotherhood of men its significant definition at a time when nationalism had something to do with the setting of limits on national boundaries; with the insane division of peoples into the confines of geographical or cultural domains; and with the setting up of barricades, as it were, in terms of military strength to conserve the very artificial apartness of peoples. He opposed British rule on the concept of unity.

I would think that the world today has no other choice but to move towards the very simplicity and directness and truth of Gandhi's principle. The resurgence of will in the international community, expressed by the awakening of people previously subjugated, by citizens traditionally coerced by the so-called rule of law, and by the youth all over the

 world, has but one message to the contemporary

consciousness: that solidarity could yet be presented by men, with no means to enforce their will but the moral force of their number and status in society, against the policies of governments that tend to divide, rather than integrate, the family of man.

There is still another lesson, for instance, in Gandhi's political position. During the second world war, India's position vis-a-vis Japan was of course crucial, in the sense that the British monarchy had to face the Japanese menace itself in Asia, particularly on Indian soil. The cooperation of the Indian nationalist movement was important, even if only as a moral force against Japan. Gandhi refused to be bothered by the issue of Fascism versus Democracy. To him the independence of India and the freedom of the Indians were not contingent on such a momentary issue. It was an absolute right. Gandhi declared that either the 'British recognize India's independence or God and anarchy will take over'.

This is a resolute way of expressing the urgency of a nonviolent stand. Its reverberation, however, still echoes in our world. It is yet a clear voice and intently listened to by societies, especially by the humanity in the Third World. So that behind the disorder of our times, the perplexed gaze of humanity still turns to scrutinize the benign face of Mahatma Gandhi smiling behind the resolution, the conviction that the brotherhood of men is a reality that politics cannot efface from the consciousness of

humanity. The principle of ahimsa, of non-injury, has sustained India through the troubled years of the Cold War. It may yet be the basic principle for our world to recognize.

Sugata Dasgupta

Many people think that Gandhi's greatest concern was with the achievement of Indian independence and that all his energy was directed towards that end. But it is necessary to realize that the political emancipation of a people was, to him, only the means for the fulfilment of a larger mission.

For his purpose, global in its sweep, was much more than the liberation of a single colony; it was indeed to help a whole people to see the central truth —the foremost societal reality of our times—which, as he saw it, had to form the pattern of institutional growth for years to come; it was to help India, as the first among others, to perceive the goal of a new society.

Overtly ambitious, Gandhi had, however, a three-fold task before him. First of all, he had to fight a colonial power, as India's slavery stood in the way of realization of the global reality—his truth. He was then to lay down the conceptual foundations of the new society as well as to find appropriate methods for its realization. The tasks were all the more difficult as Gandhi did not believe in building models and in imposing any frame on a community.

All that he was striving for was to indicate the basis of a new society which had to grow from amidst the existing one.

For the fulfilment of this social schema Gandhi had wanted to determine the goal structure and rationale for the new society and lay it bare before the people. To find the institutional framework suited for its maintenance and fruition, as well as to discover the psychological stimulus for individual and community behaviour which will progressively lead towards those goals, were some of his endeavours. Last, but not the least, in importance, was his effort to discover the means —not very different from the end—which was necessary to reach that goal. What he desired to accomplish in this context was to devise a specific structure of social action, one that would develop and sustain the political processes in the new society. That society of Gandhi's seeking was however to be radically different from the existing reality and therefore needed nothing less than a 'revolution' for its fulfilment.

Gandhi's was thus an ambitious 'game'. He had to develop the design for a new society, nurse a revolution and bring it to fruition; and do all these soon after the colonial struggle was completed. Gandhi was aware of the enormity of the task and had therefore wanted to live for five more decades— a fulsome career of a hundred and twenty-five years —knowing well that even a Gandhi, with all his

accomplishments of 1948, would still have required another fifty years to reach the goal!

It is not surprising, therefore, that Gandhi could not find time to prepare the design of the society of his vision, and of its polity and economy, to any great perfection; neither had he the opportunity to evolve the structure of the method of his revolution. All that Gandhi could do was to raise certain leading questions, point to a new direction for man and society, and indicate, through practical experimentation in limited situations, the structure of a new method of social action. These questions, the direction and the indications are of vital importance today. They are of special relevance, if I may say so, to social scientists; to economists, political scientists, sociologists and professional social workers, all alike. All those who seek to understand contemporary society in its various ramifications, to analyse its problems and to study the processes of change and methods of social work that might help the pace of planned development, can ill afford to do without him. Gandhi's writings, his career as an activist and his contributions as a contemporary social force, offer to all of them a fascinating book for study: the benchmark position indeed for analysis of the social phenomenon of the present.

For Gandhi was our contemporary and in a sense still is. Had he not been struck down by the hands of an assassin, he could have probably still been

with us and attacked, with us, the live issues of the day. It is for this reason that I say that anyone who wishes to study contemporary society, not merely for the sake of clinical analyses but for understanding the dynamics of social, institutional and human growth, will do well to acquaint himself with this great contemporary, the most perceptive social activist of our age.

The problems he had spelt out still remain the problems of our day. The perspective on some of the social issues of our time, which he had helped to define and discover, can therefore be ignored by the social commentators, planners and workers only at their great peril. For to overlook that perspective is, to a great extent, to overlook the contemporary social phenomenon; and to overlook the phenomenon is, of course, to overlook the needs of the evolving social forces and their manifold aspirations.

Gandhi analysed the social realities of his time, enumerated the problems which were confronting the people and saw all these from the point of view of the oppressed and the victims of the societal process. Unlike Marx, Gandhi's main concern was not so much with the historical analysis of contemporary events as with the social phenomenon and to discover, if possible, its implications vis-a-vis the weaker members of the society. The motivation which guided Gandhi into the career of a life-long activist was thus primarily social.

His anxiety was to examine how the total process had curbed human growth and held back all efforts for individual and institutional development. One can possibly compare, in this context, Gandhi's motivations with the early inspirations of the Buddha. The latter had renounced his princely position and had gone out in search of liberation, when he found that all men were victims of natural decay such as old age, death and disease; problems which were not the products of any social system but of life itself. Buddha's early inspiration—his search for the liberation of human beings—had thus something to do with man's interaction with the power of the supreme being; whereas Gandhi's perception was a social product.

His first protest was a conditioned reflex, as he came face to face with the racist imperialism of South Africa. His attention was then directed towards the three foremost social institutions of the day—imperialism, capitalism and racism—which he found had bled the many hapless victims who were lured to them. Gandhi reacted sharply to these institutions—as also to the industrial revolution, their mother—as he came to the conclusion that the 'revolution' so called, although it had created great wealth and prosperity for a few, was also responsible for the onset of a ruthless process of exploitation.

Gandhi thus developed his central theme of social

activism and, later, of revolution only when he clearly saw through the implications of certain basic social, economic and political institutions of our time. It was his finding, therefore, that all of them—imperialism, capitalism and racism—brought heavy pressures on individuals and reduced the vast majority of the people to positions of servitude and poverty. Later Gandhi discovered the very same image of exploitation in several other institutions occupying key positions in his own home. Among these were centralized government; caste, religious chauvinism and an elite-centred apparatus of education. He therefore began to revolt against the total set-up.

Gandhi found that governments led to 'over organization' and consequently to disintegration of individuals; that capitalism led to large industries and urban growth; and both of them to a total withering away of some of the basic values and structures of our civilization. All these institutions, mistakenly considered as tools of progress, were responsible for the unabashed exploitation of a great many people. It made men subservient to machines and systems, deprived them of the right of self-actualization and led to monopolies of various kinds. Concentration of wealth, power and privileges, monopolistic consumption and soaring standards of living for only a few, were some of the by-products of the set-up still dear to mankind.

 Gandhi described this new typology of exploitation

bred by the then emerging world as 'violence' and characterized the so-called modern society as violent and oppressive. Gandhi discovered that exploitation provided the cornerstone of that society and that it led to centralization of power and resources. He therefore gave a new meaning to the concept and what the term exploitation now meant in its new form indeed characterizes the evil genius of the whole age.

For exploitation was no longer to mean, as Gandhi saw it, only deprival and expropriation but also a conscious seeking of such attitudes and norms which give pride of place to several social mechanisms of doubtful value, e.g. conflict, competition, hatred and force.

Gandhi gave a new connotation to the old term and 'exploitation' to him came to acquire varied meanings. It was individual as well as societal; it meant exploitation of men by men, of institutions by institutions, of men by institutions, as also of institutions and systems by individuals, groups and classes. Exploitation had then provided and indeed still provides the hard core of intra-societal relationship in the new industrial complex. It is also multifaceted in structure. Political, economic and psychological exploitation, both societal and individual, has thus tarnished the image of society as a whole and Gandhi reacted sharply to this pathological pressure with the spirit of an undaunted rebel. The basis of his reaction was, of

course, provided by the analysis of the impact of exploitation, now called violence in its new connotation.

The main contribution of Gandhi, however, lies not so much in arriving at a correct appraisal of the contemporary society in negative terms as in pointing out towards a new horizon; one that provides a positive alternative to a misguided elite and sets out to discover, on the basis of a realistic analysis of the total system, the perspectives of a new society. Such a society was obviously to be nonviolent and peaceful, and non-exploitative and equalitarian in structure. It was to be the next step in human civilization, what Gandhi called the 'swaraj' society of the future.

In analysing the social reality, however, Gandhi was not airy in his approach, but had consciously used an 'empirical-intuitive' tool for the purpose. His method could also, in a sense, be called experimental. For he was constantly endeavouring to discover the central 'truth', the main facts of life that lay subdued under social pressures. The purpose was to discover, on the basis of such analysis of a series of social situations, where exactly one could find the truth or reality at its very best manifestation. For truth, reflex of reality, obviously refers to a state where men could be at great ease with their environment and acquire a decisive control over the decision-making apparatuses of society, in a manner that guarantees

the highest possible opportunity for self-expression to the participant in the process.

Gandhi's truth, as Professor Naess has put it, then meant freedom of self-actualization for societal development. The endeavour was to find an institutional set-up and/or a societal frame in which men could find that freedom and also be able to continue their exploration for all time to come for the attainment of that ever-changing phenomenon known as 'truth'. Gandhi's experiments were directed towards this purpose, as he sought to find, on the basis of his direct and continuous involvement in the societal process, a new set of roles, goals, norms and institutions which would provide the best possible opportunity for self-expression to all.

The method he applied was empirical in its bearing. For Gandhi used his own person and his immediate oppressive environment as his 'laboratory' and sought to test his principles both in situations of control and experiment. First of all, Gandhi spent a year, under the advice of Gokhale, observing the facts of political life in India and only then, with the mature insight at his command, did he launch on specific experiments which sought to establish the rights of men in several areas of pressure and repression. As Gandhi thus gathered experience first-hand, he made systematic attempts to conceptualize the findings, the basis of

 generalization being his own intuitive understanding

of the subjects under review, as well as the great power of intellectual speculation that he possessed. What were the results, then, of such experiments with reality and what were some of the conclusions that emerged from the unique tool of analysis that Gandhi used? The answer is easy.

The data that the investigations yielded had certainly helped to confirm the main hypothesis of Gandhi and conclusively established that the central ethos of society was violence. Exploitation, over-organization, cut-throat competition and personal aggrandisement lay at its bottom and provided the roots of all unrest. Not that men made no efforts to reduce the imbalances which characterized the oppressive social set-up, but the techniques they used and the ideologies they preached for the purpose, were more or less self-defeating; for all attempts at the restoration of the societal equilibrium had often sought to use the very rules of the game which they were now out to destroy. For man's efforts to reduce the tensions of an industrial society and its inherent conflicts and contradictions by the use of the same techniques, which lead to further conflicts and contradictions, could hardly produce, as Gandhi saw it, any worth-while results. The most significant finding of Gandhi's analysis was, therefore, the discovery of a new stimulus for change, one that was required for a total transformation of the existing set-up and had to be different from anything used so far!

Gandhi had therefore raised, as a result of his analysis, certain questions of fundamental value. These concern man's relations with his total environment, the nature and meaning of social reality, the underlying theme behind the complex of the 'individual-institution-system' framework, the type of bond that holds these together as well as the methods required for completely changing the existing set-up. Man's relationship with his own creation, such as machines, megalopolises, economic institutions and political organizations, and the societal processes which establish organizations, revolutionize productive techniques, add to the complexities of organizations and bring in intra-societal maladjustments—all these formed the fields of Gandhi's inquiry.

Other questions raised by Gandhi related to a variety of themes and situations, such as: What should be the aims of a developmental process? Should it help the rich and the powerful first and then the others or aim to overturn the social pyramid in favour of the poor? In what type of an organization would the exploitative devices be the least operative? What should be the structure and functions of the new polity and economy, in which individuals would find their fullest development and institutions defy the control of vested interests? The relationship between national governments and their 'local' and global
 counterparts; the question of finding appropriate

techniques of economic and social development which do not leave behind a great many under-privileged but emphasize the objectives of equality and harmony; and finally, the problem of discovering a rapid and revolutionary method of social transformation which could bring into existence the new society in the shortest possible time—these were some of the problems that were raised in this context.

Gandhi has thus, on the basis of his analysis of the societal process, sought to ask a great many questions. The most important of these raise the crucial issue of the age. What would be the institutional arrangements that would make a harmonious relationship between the individual and the societal process? The question was the product of Gandhi's social concern and had indeed opened the way for a fundamental inquiry of empirical import.

One way of answering the question is possibly to follow the probable direction of the new society which the man who raised the question had himself in mind. In analysing the societal process and in surveying the needs of men, Gandhi had clearly seen the urgency of moving forward to a new 'model' of society. He was however most reluctant to build the model all by himself, his central task being only to plead for certain values, institutions and systems which might motivate men to carve out models of their choice.

The main aim of such a society was certainly to eschew exploitation in all forms. That would be possible, Gandhi thought, under the rule of swaraj, in what he called a nonviolent society, an economy of permanence and a policy of peace providing its supporting base. Decentralization, as against over-organization, would be its cornerstone, and the institutional framework required for its upkeep must provide for direct democratic control in as many spheres of life as possible. The elite members of such a society should voluntarily delimit their wants and curtail excessive use of consumer goods on the basis of self-abnegation, so that such delimitation on the part of the privileged would go a long way towards bringing in an equalitarian society.

Gandhi's main difference with his contemporaries lay in the choice of methods. He thought that the new society that he was to bring into existence would be qualitatively so different from all existing social orders that a completely new approach was required for its establishment. To use a traditional weapon for the fruition of so modern a concept was indeed ethically untenable. Gandhi, therefore, did not consider it appropriate or necessary to use hate to end all hatred, to use conflict to end all conflicts or, for that matter, to use force to reckon with the doctrine of force. Gandhi did not, in other words, decide to fight violence by new violence. He however
 knew full well, and had given vent to his feeling on

several occasions, that any surrender to violence, social or individual, would be disastrous to society. He had accordingly preferred even to use 'violence' to counteract violence, if no other means of protest or struggle was at hand. Yet Gandhi had no manner of doubt in his mind that a new technique of revolution was not far from sight. This, his new method of change, was nonviolence—one that still provides the central dictum of the gandhian thesis of social revolution.

If violence meant hatred, exploitation, over-organization and use of force, nonviolence provided the very antithesis of all these. It had however a positive as well as a negative connotation, a dynamic as well as a clinical meaning. In its positive and ethical forms, nonviolence refers to the type of society that Gandhi was searching for. In its 'negative' or dynamic context nonviolence however meant something very different. It provided a new method of change—the much sought for know-how for the great social revolution of his dreams.

Nonviolence as a movement thus meant a democratic manoeuvre; one that inspires a whole people, as against a limited coterie, to move on to launch a struggle. Nonviolence is thus a people-oriented rather than a coterie-oriented strategy for political upheaval. It is a stimulus for total social change initiated by a whole nation or people all by itself.

 Since such a revolution leads to the total

transformation of institutional and value systems, it helps not only those who spearhead the revolution or the victims of the existing order. The process of transformation is so sweeping that it helps both the victim and the victor alike to unshackle the fetters that hold them down. A nonviolent movement thus aims to change social systems and revolutionize motivations, making it evident to the victor and the victim that they are in the final analysis co-sharers of a common heritage of exploitation. A nonviolent struggle that succeeds thus leads to a change of heart of both the parties. The victor now sees that the enemy also was a victim of his own frailty; and the latter, although defeated, realizes the great value of the defeat. The victory now leads to a new and bold set-up, where not only the victor but the vanquished too can live in honour.

The primary motivation for struggle stems here from societal considerations. It begins by strengthening the weak and ends up by helping the aggressor as well. It inspires the latter to give up his rights so-called, through a process of self-abnegation, and to realize the limitations of his strength. The dynamics of change thus arise in this context from a spirit of brotherhood and harmony, from the prospect of a resolution of conflict and peace, rather than from the horrors of war and hatred.

Nonviolence, however, does not mean surrender to evil. Nor does a nonviolent struggle mean compromise with violence. It means a total victory

instead, one that helps the oppressor to realize his folly and seek rehabilitation in a spirit of equality with those who were once his enemy.

The analysis of society that Gandhi made and the direction in which, on the basis of such analysis, he wanted it to move, as well as the methodology of change and revolution suggested by him, are all available to us even today. But they are available only in a rudimentary form; for some of them were really a part of the great experiment that he was conducting in search of his truth but which he had to leave half-way and half-done. While the blueprint that Gandhi wanted to prepare for determining the basis of the new society is yet to be completed by perceptive social thinkers and scientists, it is necessary to remember that Gandhi's total schema of social development was based on a twofold stimulus. The reflex of the new set-up was thus provided by the social realities of his time, while the validity of the total scheme was drawn from a rationale of global development.

Gandhi's entire approach was thus societal in content. Although Gandhi reposed great faith in God and believed in the values of spirituality and ethics, his spirituality, his God and his ethics were all products of the social reality. It is interesting to observe the gradual evolution of Gandhi's position in this regard. There was a time when Gandhi had thought that God would provide all the social

 guidance necessary for the recovery of man and his

soul from the oppressive social set-up. 'God is truth' had said Gandhi and it was to God, therefore, that he had called upon all seekers of societal truth or reality to turn themselves.

Later Gandhi revised his position and came to the conclusion that the social reality was itself God. 'Truth is God' said Gandhi in later years and indicated that he had found his God in the habitats of the poor, the daridranarayana. Gandhi's position became further clear when he said, in his Independence Day message to the country on 15 August 1947, that 'God comes to the poor in the shape of bread'. This orbit of relationship that he had worked out between God, 'truth' and social reality placed, as one can see, social reality in the most crucial position and made everything else subservient to it. Gandhi's main concern was, therefore, with truth—the supreme fact of life, one that had accounted for the total global reality of his times.

The next step in human society was indeed to be of global significance. For Gandhi, in tailoring his plans of social development, had constantly to keep not only a single country but the entire mankind in view. His endeavour was thus to free human beings from oppressive pressures and social, economic and political exploitations of all kinds. The first step he took in this regard was obviously to win the independence of India. For how could he

 have initiated a movement for the freedom of the

entire mankind from all types of societal fetters and controls, without first demonstrating to the world at large what could be the content of such freedom? And how could that have been practised and demonstrated without shaking off the imperialist yoke from the shoulders of his own country? Indian independence was thus a crucial pilot project, one that ultimately freed both the master and the slave from an unbearable and painful relationship.

It is in realization of this position that Toynbee had once observed that Gandhi's greatest contribution lay not so much in freeing India from the foreign yoke as in delivering Britain from her ignominious relationship. Be that as it may. Gandhi had also to demonstrate the efficacy of his method of nonviolence—the people-oriented, all-embracing movement for social and political emancipation—to the rest of the world and set up a model for others. How could he have done that, had he not used the method experimentally, at least in the context of a specific culture or area?

This is exactly what Gandhi had sought to do in the wake of the struggle for Indian independence. It is for this reason that Geoffrey Ashe observes, in estimating the radiation effects of Gandhi's techniques of social change, that 'everybody on earth has been affected by Gandhi. Because of him the British Empire ceased to exist and when his own people threw Europe off the rest of Asia and Africa followed'; and again: 'His special teachings and

techniques have inspired other struggles for deliverance in quarters where armed revolt would have been out of the question'.

In preparing the central thesis for social change, Gandhi has thus drawn from the total global environs as well as from the cultures of restraint and fearlessness embodied by many peoples of the world. His knowledge of western society and of the impact of its many exploitative institutions was formidable. He could thus learn of the objectives of a probable new world from the contours of the existing one itself.

He got acquainted with the new values right from the days of his self-preparation, from his readings of Ruskin, Thoreau, and Tolstoy. As he got confirmed in his attitude towards vegetarianism in England and as he practised satyagraha, then called passive resistance, for the first time in South Africa in the set-up of a non-Indian culture, Gandhi developed the constructs of a new theory. Gandhi had also drawn profusely from Christianity, from his knowledge of law and faith in constitutionalism as well as from the negative impacts of imperialism and capitalism. With all these lessons when Gandhi set out to prepare the contours of a new society, what could we have called that mission but a phenomenon of global significance?

Gandhi had, of course, learnt from his indigenous culture as well. But, here again, Gandhi drew more
 from the needs of the people, from the

confrontations he had with the contemporary folk culture of his country and the struggles that his people waged under his own leadership. Gandhi's knowledge of Sanskrit, the only gateway to ancient India, was very limited and so also his familiarity with ancient lore. Nor was nonviolence, his main contribution to the theory of social change, a highly sought for goal in any polity of the world and not certainly in the Indian polity of ancient times. Gandhi had thus drawn from the total global environment and used that knowledge to build the constructs of a new Indian culture. Accordingly he also helped to reinterpret some of our own classics, such as the *Gita*, and tried to provide a new rationale for the theory of nonviolence, here on our own soil, in India.

It is difficult to say therefore that Gandhi was a peculiarly Indian product or the product of the Hindu religion as such. Gandhi was, on the other hand, truly a product of his time and culture. Himself a global phenomenon, the steps he indicated for the revolutionization of society and the techniques he introduced for the development of a new consciousness were therefore global too.

It is interesting to note in this context that two of the greatest followers of Gandhi, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Martin Luther King, are not Indians but belong to two different cultures of the world. This would prove, if proof were needed, that the tenets of Gandhism or the elements of Gandhi's

thoughts are of global value and significance. His analysis of the total system, his enumeration of social problems and his endeavours to provide the rationale of a new society were likewise the articulations of a global goal. In his search for truth, Gandhi was indeed looking for what could have logically been the next step in the global society.

That next step is not far to seek. For the values, norms, ethics and institutions that Gandhi had recommended as ideal types for India have all of a sudden found their global projection in several isolated movements that are taking place all over the western world today. Not all of these, however, are wholly gandhian in concept. Neither did the sponsors of these movements learn their lessons from Gandhi. But all that is immaterial. For the very fact that the long-winding path of world civilization is today moving increasingly towards some of the cherished themes of gandhian thought shows how correct Gandhi's reading of social reality was. It is probably for this reason that Erik Erikson chooses to call Gandhi 'a model of activism in our culture' and A.K. Saran finds in him the embodiment of 'certain ideas, which are nothing if not of universal significance'.

References

These are intended to help the reader who wishes to consult the sources for the quotations from Gandhi. The discussions at the symposium having been mostly unscripted, with participants often quoting from memory, not all the passages referred to in the text can be traced to an identifiable Gandhi source, although they generally echo authentic Gandhi ideas. References relating to the period up to May 1929 can be easily found reproduced in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Government of India, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1958-70) of which at the time of printing forty volumes had been published.

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8. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase,* vol. 1 (Ahmedabad, 1956) p. 421.
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33. *Young India*, 10 March 1920.
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appendices

working document
notes on participants

Working Document[e]

On the occasion of the centenary of Gandhi's birth, the Director-General of Unesco was authorized to organize, in 1969, in consultation with the Indian National Commission, an international symposium on 'Truth and Nonviolence in Gandhi's Humanism'

Three aspects of this humanism will be examined: (a) the relations of truth and nonviolence in Gandhi's thinking; (b) the application of the principles resulting therefrom in Gandhi's teaching and work; (c) the significance and implications of these principles in the world today. These three aspects do not cover the whole of Gandhi's 'message', but they offer the possibility of reflecting upon his character and possible impact upon the present-day world.

THE RELATIONS OF TRUTH AND NONVIOLENCE IN GANDHI'S THINKING

Since truth and nonviolence are related terms, it would help first of all to understand what meaning they had for Gandhi. The mere fact of their being linked would seem to suggest that truth and nonviolence are not to be thought of as general concepts but that truth is what expresses itself in

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 e. Prepared by the Unesco Division of Philosophy.

nonviolent action and nonviolence is what advances the cause of truth.

Truth

1. Gandhi was to make political demands in the name of truth, thus showing that for him truth was inseparable from justice. Perhaps then truth is the theoretical aspect of justice and justice the practical and moral aspect of truth.

2. Moreover, true to his spiritual heritage, Gandhi insists on the link between truth and the divine: 'If God is love, God is, above all, truth.... Two years ago, however, I went a step farther and said: "Truth is God".' (*Young India*, 31 December 1931.) These notions of truth and justice thus assume a sacred and strictly religious emphasis akin to mystical experience.

3. On the other hand, there is Gandhi's own definition: 'I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist.' (*Young India*, 11 August 1920.) In this sense certain commentators see in Gandhi's thought 'orthopractice' rather than 'orthodoxy' (Masson-Oursel, O. Lacombe). Accordingly, should Gandhi be thought of as a man of action or as a contemplative? as a theorist or as a politician?

4. As the title for his autobiography, Gandhi chose 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth', meaning to demonstrate that truth is discovered in and through action. And indeed his wisdom of satyagraha found expression when faced with events

and situations, first in South Africa, then in India. Does this give it a character which is existentialist, pragmatic or practical? To guide him in his work Gandhi does not hesitate to listen to 'the small voice within him'. Is this an intuition of his moral consciousness? It could be important to determine these points if we are to know whether Gandhi's thinking reveals a general philosophy, or an ethic of political action.

Nonviolence

5. If truth is conceived of as an experimental discovery, it is easier to discern the relationship it may have with violence or nonviolence. But, be it noted, these terms again are used in a gandhian sense.

What is satyagraha? Literally: the firm embrace of truth (satya=truth, agraha=the embrace of). A fervent disciple of Gandhi, the Orientalist Louis Massignon, interprets this definition as: the civic demand for truth.

6. With a view to attaining truth, Gandhi chose the way of ahimsa, which literally means: not to do harm; and, by extension: compassion, love. And he explains that ahimsa is to satyagraha what the means are to the end, thus emphasizing that the end and means are two parts of the same thing.

7. This correspondence affects the use of means and also their user. In other words, the satyagrahi and his acts must share the same climate of truth,

which is that of the end pursued. This assumes that Gandhi perceived in the same act the implicit unity of satyagraha, ahimsa and the satyagrahi, although this unity becomes explicit later. Wuat consequences follow from this?

(a) *Satyagraha and ahimsa*

Can ahimsa be reduced to passive resistance? On the one hand, Gandhi refuses to injure the adversary; on the other, his discipline recommends individual or collective fasting (hartal), strikes, the boycotting of goods. Where is the constraint in such measures? Does Gandhi not take into account, for example, the deteriorating economy of the established powers? In particular, how far does fasting unto death constitute or not constitute an act of moral violence done to the adversary?

(b) *The use of means*

Can gandhian resistance be considered a formula to be used in any situation whatever, and by no matter whom, or only in certain circumstances and by the satyagrahi only?

(c) *The satyagrahi*

Can he reject violence in his actions while cultivating it in his mind? The question is so basic that Gandhi, at the risk of disappointing his disciples, suspended his resistance when in full action. What is, therefore, for him the real aim of

sobriety in life and morals, of the vows of chastity which he took, of self-control in all its senses, of withdrawal into the ashram, of the self-imposed silence each Monday? In brief, what is the real purpose of brahmacharya?

Violence and beyond violence

8. Gandhi's nonviolence does not seem categorically to exclude all forms of violence. First, there are the forms of violence in everyday life, without which man cannot live if he is to dress and feed himself, etc. Next, nonviolence is defined as opposition to fear: 'Ahimsa is incompatible with fear'. (*Young India,* 4 November 1926.) 'Abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish. It is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature.' (*Young India,* 11 August 1920.) But there are times when violence is recommended: 'Where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence.' (*Young India,* 11 August 1920.) 'I want both the Hindus and Mussulmans to cultivate the cool courage to die without killing. But if one has not that courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed, rather than in a cowardly manner flee from danger. For the latter, in spite of his flight, does commit mental himsa. He flees because he has not the courage to be killed in the act of killing.' (*Young India,* 20 October 1921.) 'I would risk violence a thousand times than risk the emasculation of a

whole race.' (*Young India*, 4 August 1920.) 'I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour, than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour.' (*Young India*, 11 August 1920.) Do not these texts reveal a generally unknown aspect of Gandhi's thought?

9. Thus it is seen that nonviolence is not the contrary of violence, but that it goes beyond violence; a doing violence to violence. Therefore all urge to violence within the self must be destroyed, and even the courage to face death must be accepted.

But yet another step must be taken in order to follow Gandhi. He says: 'Forgiveness adorns a soldier.' (*Young India*, 11 August 1920.) 'He who returns good for evil conquers the world.' (Autobiography.)

It is because of this 'going-beyond' that Gandhi earned the name of mahatma (=the great soul, the magnanimous one). Whatever judgement we may pass on the efficacy of these counsels, do they not seem to throw light on Gandhi's death? To the fanatic who assassinates him he murmurs 'Ram, Ram', praying to the Divinity to release the criminal from the burden of his karma, his responsibility.

10. It seems, taken all in all, that if Gandhi chose nonviolence in order to rediscover truth, it is because nonviolence opens the minds of men to

 freedom and disinterestedness, allowing therefore a

more sincere and objective recovery of a truth lost. On the one hand there is the objective of Gandhi's discipline; on the other hand, nonviolence, although it contests situations, is always a respecter of persons. Gandhi felt himself to be a British citizen, even in his refusal of British power, and he helped the authorities of the Transvaal as in India, during the First War. This in itself made some people doubt his sincerity. For him, however, this attitude aimed at obtaining a change in situations (the freedom of India) without subversion. We may ask if he succeeded. And if he did not, we may ask what value does his experiment and his testimony retain for us?

THE APPLICATION OF GANDHI'S PRINCIPLES TO HIS TEACHING AND WORK

11. Gandhi's course having been simultaneously lived and thought, is it possible to analyse the relations of truth and of nonviolence without evoking, at the same time, his teaching and his acts? Here certain aspects of his undertaking could be considered: (1) the political liberation of India; (2) her economic liberation; (3) education; (4) social non-discrimination; (5) religious tolerance; (6) universalism. Are these aspects organically linked and of like importance?

12 (1). *The political liberation of India*

 Gandhi never ceased insisting upon the necessity of

linking political 'disalienation' and the 'disalienation' of the self. His efforts are therefore turned both towards the outside world and towards the inner self.

(a) *The inner self*

It is unnecessary to mention 'gandhian asceticism' to master all violence, even violence of the mind. We have only to remember: the hartal of 6 April 1919 against the Rowlatt Acts; the hartal of 1930 against discrimination of untouchables; the foundation of two ashrams in South Africa (Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm) and two others in India (Ahmedabad and Wardha); the discipline imposing sobriety of the senses: food, continence, clothing (wearing of khadi), silence.

(b) *The outside world: In South Africa (1893-1914)*

Struggle for the emancipation of Indian emigrants. Establishment of the Natal Indian Congress (1894); launching of the weekly *Indian Opinion* (1904); Gandhi leads two protest marches (1906 and 1913) until General Smuts repeals the Black Act (1914). During this period Gandhi was arrested six times and four times sentenced to imprisonment. Even so, he organized relief services for the Empire, during the Boer War.

Return to India (1915-1948)

 Nonviolent action against Indian proprietors (indigo

planters of Champaran, spinning mills in Ahmedabad: 1916-1918). And yet, during this period of world war, always loyal to the Empire, Gandhi undertook a recruiting campaign to form an army of volunteers in the service of the government.

From 1918 on, Gandhi passes from cooperation to non-cooperation with the Government of India. Reason: the Rowlatt report and the laws voted by the Legislative Council.

Hartal of 30 March or 6 April, blood being shed by the shooting at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, on 13 April. Gandhi follows two objectives: (a) to uphold Moslem demands against the abolition of the Caliphate at Istanbul; (b) the boycott of imports.

Launching of two periodicals, *Young India* (in English) and *Navajivan* (in Gujarati). Congress adopts civil disobedience, and action seems to be succeeding when Gandhi suspends the movement (February 1922) because nonviolence is not yet understood.

Freed from prison (January 1924) Gandhi tours the country to educate the people morally. To this end he publishes his 'Prison Diary' and his Autobiography. A fast of 21 days (1924) to prevent conflict between Moslems and Hindus.

Elected president of Congress (1928) Gandhi withdraws in favour of Nehru but still exerts strong influence over Congress. He has a resolution
 adopted in favour of the complete independence of

India, if dominion status is not granted by 1929. This status is refused. Gandhi begins 'the war of independence' by the 'salt march', and threatens the pillaging of stores. In 1932, struggle against discrimination amongst the electorate, separating caste Hindus and untouchables. Enters on a fast (to death if necessary) until he obtains concessions. In 1934 Gandhi, at 65, leaves Congress to undertake social reform: he founds the Association of Village Industries. During the second world war, in 1940, when Great Britain refused the participation of India on an equal footing with the Dominions, he also refused all cooperation. In 1942, the motion 'Quit India' is voted by Congress; Gandhi and 25,000 people are imprisoned. His wife dies in prison. He is released—at 74 years of age. In 1947 (15 August) the complete independence of India is proclaimed. Nehru is appointed Prime Minister. But the socio-religious conflict between Hindus and Moslems intensifies, and the independence of India is accompanied by the 'vivisection' into the Indian Union and Pakistan. Gandhi, sick at heart, travels the country, trying to allay fanaticism. In 1948 he accompanies the pilgrimage of Moslem women to Mehrauli; he is assassinated.

Since all the events of Gandhi's life can be grouped around his fight for political freedom, does this not prove it to be the predominant aspect of his work? Does the political leader overshadow the 'Bapu', father of the nation, or is Gandhi a leader

of a new type—or of a very old one—whose spiritual action adds to the prestige of his political work? Is this type of leader a possibility for the future or is it possible only granted certain circumstances and contingencies?

12 (2). *Economic freedom*

At the same time as the boycott of imports, Gandhi preached economic self-sufficiency and consumption of native products (swadeshi). This is the significance of the famous 'salt march'. The 'campaign of the spinning wheel' and the use of woven cotton (khadi) have the same purpose and so does the decentralization of production.

Further, Gandhi showed his hostility towards industrial civilization and its double incentive to over-production and over-consumption, without, however, completely condemning machinery, the spinning wheel being an early form of machine.

Are the various means proposed by Gandhi effective against foreign domination, or for the economic development of a country? Is it possible to deduce from Gandhi's statements on the use of property a social doctrine concerning the exploitation of property and production?

12 (3). *Education*

Gandhi expressed his mistrust of the teaching and education given by British universities and
 institutions with their bookish and 'artificial' values

and culture. 'It is better to remain illiterate and break stones for love of freedom than to try to acquire a literary culture and yet be chained like a slave.' (Autobiography.)

On the other hand he advocates a generalized elementary education, insisting on the mother tongue and the re-activation of Hindustani, as well as the further education of adolescents and adults, both men and women. This education should 'morally' equip citizens all through their lives, since education can never be considered completed.

Here again we may ask: does education, thus understood, aim at liberation from foreign influence and the preparation of citizens to face the demands of the twentieth century?

12 (4). *Social non-discrimination*

Linking social 'disalienation' with political 'disalienation', Gandhi struggled for the rehabilitation of the untouchables (pariahs). This battle was on two fronts: against caste resistance and against the British Parliament, which drew up a statute for India with voters separated into untouchables and the rest of the nation. Could Gandhi have done more for the social integration of all citizens?

12 (5). *Religious tolerance*

Gandhi fought for brotherhood between religions. He espoused Moslem interests in the historical

problem of the Caliphate. He set the example of religious solidarity. He even died for it. Was his tolerance liberalism as we understand it today, or was it rather respect for religion over and above any church, for truth, of which our particular convictions are but so many aspects?

12 (6). *Universalism*

'God has never drawn up frontiers.' (*Young India*, 31 December 1931).

Although influenced by his British education, having a predilection for the Gospel, and for Tolstoy, Gandhi is hostile to western civilization. However, he makes it clear that his aversion for technology as dominated by capitalism does not affect his friendship for western man, politicians and non-politicians alike.

Moreover, Gandhi abominates the distinction between foreigners and natives, the British having in his opinion their place in an independent India. Does he not then embody a tragic aspect of the conflict between East and West which he tried to unite by his universalism? 'My creed is to serve God, and, consequently, humanity.' (*Young India*, 23 October 1924.)

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THESE PRINCIPLES IN THE WORLD TODAY

13. Gandhi's work has been the subject of
 controversy; it has its devotees and its detractors.

But whatever judgement may be passed on its value, the question turns upon its significance and relevance twenty years after his death, in a world undergoing profound changes. Is there a place in it for nonviolence when violence assumes forms so many and so widespread, using all the means that technology puts at its disposal?

14. Can Gandhi's success be explained purely and simply by a combination of historical circumstances? Or was it due to more permanent factors, distinct, to some extent, from historical circumstances? On the one hand, the authenticity of a leader who demands of himself more than he does of others, educating his citizens but with a profound respect for their liberty, taking decisions but explaining them in order to win the support of men's minds and hearts; on the other, the nature of nonviolence itself, arraigning the oppression of which it is the victim, but respecting the person of the oppressor, thus permitting a dialogue and reciprocal concessions; to these moral and psychological factors should we add a more specifically sociological one: the fact that Gandhi set the masses in motion, in that way showing the power behind poverty, that is, in modern terms, behind the rural and industrial proletariat, the developing third world, thus giving the masses the responsibility for shaping their own destiny?

15. Or again, could Gandhi's experiment be neutralized by the following argument: Was his

resistance able to succeed because it took place within a closed system—politically and economically—India being part of the British Empire, and nonviolence thus constraining a directly involved adversary; whereas today after decolonization, the world is politically and economically a relatively open system, and acts of violence are so many and various that localized nonviolent resistance would be of no avail?

16. If the foregoing argument is not irrefutable, could it be answered by the statement that, just because the universe is a relatively open system, the solidarity of nonviolent resisters from one country to another, should they decide upon non-participation and civil disobedience, may then alert public opinion, regional or international, and thus prevail over the oppressor? But, in that case, what becomes of 'gandhian asceticism'? Does it lose the moral and spiritual character that Gandhi attached to nonviolence?

17. In the contemporary international context, does not the discussion lead up, therefore, to the problem of organizing peace?

Notes on Participants

Opening Session

RENE MAHEU: Director-General of Unesco

PREM KIRPAL: Vice-President, Executive Board, Unesco.

WILLIAM A. ETEKI-MBOUMOUA: President, General Conference, Unesco.

S. CHAKRAVARTI: Education Secretary, Government of India.

PHILIP NOEL-BAKER: Nobel Peace Prize, 1959.

EDMOND MICHELET: Minister of State for Cultural Affairs, France.

Participants

FUAD E. BUSTANY: Dean, Arts Department, Lebanese University, Beirut; Professor of History and Civilization of Near East; Professor of Islamic Philosophy; Member, Unesco National Commission, Lebanon. Publications: over a hundred, on Arabic Literature and Islamic Civilization.

ANIBAL DEL CAMPO: Professor of History of Modern Philosophy and Metaphysics, University of Montevideo, Uruguay. Lately President, Philosophical Society of Uruguay. Member, Unesco National Commission, Uruguay. Publications: *Handbook of Logic; The De-humanization of Reason; The Liberty and Movement of Reason; Tagore as Pedagogue; Comparative Philosophy in Japan: The Work of K. Kawada; Religion and Social Reality in India*, etc.

SUGATA DASGUPTA: Joint Director, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, India. Publications: *Towards a Philosophy of Social Work in India; History of Rural Development in India.* [Professor Dasgupta was prevented from attending but sent in a paper, included here.]

M. A. DROBYSHEV: Senior Research Scholar, Institute of the Peoples of Asia, USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow. Publications: on Economy and History of India, Pakistan, Nepal and Iran.

YAHIA EL-KACHAB: Professor of Persian Literature and History, Cairo University, UAR. Presently visiting Professor, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA. Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, London. Fellow of the Historical Society, Cairo. Publications: *Persian Literature in the Nineteenth Century; The Meeting between the Arab and Iranian*

Civilizations; and several translations from Persian into Arabic.

WILLIAM A. ETEKI-MBOUMOUA: President, Unesco General Conference. Former Minister of Education, Arts and Youth, Federal Republic of Cameroons. Publications: various, on Negro-African Culture; adaptation of Teaching Programs to Africa, etc.

A. G. RAVAN FARHADI: Director-General, Political Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kabul, Afghanistan. Publications: on Moslem Philosophy, Afghan Linguistics.

JEANNE HERSCH: Professor of Philosophy, University of Geneva, Switzerland. Former Director, Division of Philosophy, Unesco. Publications: *L'Illusion philosophique; L'Etre et la Forme; Ideologies et realite; Temps alternes; Le Droit d'etre un homme.*

SAUL KARSZ: Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Paris University (Sorbonne). Publications: *Introduction to Hegel; Lectura de Althusser.*

MILOSLAV KRASA: Indologist at the Oriental Institute, Prague, Czechoslovakia, specializing in Modern Indian History and Culture. Fellow of the

Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta.

OLIVIER A. LACOMBE: Professor of Philosophy, University of Paris. Publications: *L'absolu selon le Vedanta; La doctrine morale et metaphysique de Ramanuja; Existence de l'homme; Chemins de l'Inde et philosophie chretienne; Gandhi ou la force de l'ame.*

JOSEPH J. LANZA DEL VASTO: Poet, musician, painter and sculptor. Met Gandhi in 1937-38, when he was given the name of Shantidas. Founded in 1948 a Gandhi Ashram in south of France and a nonviolent Order named the Ark. Publications: *Le dialogue de l'amitie; Le chiffre des choses; Principes et preceptes du retour a l'evidence; Le pelerinage aux sources; Commentaires de l'Evangile; Vinoba ou le nouveau pelerinage*; *La montee des ames vivantes; Approches de la vie interieure,* etc.

ARNE NAESS: Director, Institute of Philosophy, University of Oslo. Publications: (with Galtung) *Gandhi's Political Ethic;* (in Norwegian) *Some Comments on the Meaning and Use of Game Theory; Communications and Strategy—Elements of Applied Semantics.*

YASUAKI NARA: Professor of Sanskrit at various Japanese Universities, including Komazawa University, Tokyo. Former Professor, Government

Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

PHILIP NOEL-BAKER: Member of the British Parliament, 1929-70. Nobel Peace Prize, 1959. Member of British Delegation to the League of Nations. Publications: *The League of Nations at Work; The Geneva Protocol; Disarmament; Disarmament and the Coolidge Conference; The Juridical Status of the British Dominions in International Law; The Private Manufacture of Armaments; The Arms Race: A Programme for World Disarmament.*

PAUL F. POWER: Professor of Political Science, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. Member: International Studies Association, Association of Asian Studies, African Studies Association. Publications: *Gandhi on World Affairs.*

PREM PURACHATRA: Ambassador of Thailand to India. Former Professor, Chulalongkorn University and Thamasat University, Thailand. Publications: *Magic Lotus; World Tour; Scandinavian Journey.*

WALPOLA RAHULA THERO: Visiting Professor, Department of Comparative Religion. North Western University, Illinois, USA. Former Vice-Chancellor, Vidyodaya University, Ceylon. Publications: *Buddhism in Ceylon.*

G. RAMACHANDRAN: Director. Gandhigram, Madurai, India. Editor of *Gandhi Marg*. Member, Executive Committee, Gandhi Peace Foundation and Gandhi National Memorial Trust. Chairman, All India Review Committee on Rural Institutes. Till recently Member of the Indian Parliament. Spent 1926 with Gandhi in the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati. Imprisoned several times during India's struggle for independence.

CARLOS P. ROMULO: Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Philippines. Former President, UN General Assembly. Pulitzer Prize. Publications: *Crusade in Asia; The Meaning of Bandung; Contemporary Nationalism and World Order; Identity and Change; Evasions and Response*.

ROMESH THAPAR: Director, India International Centre, New Delhi. Former Editor, *Times of India, Seminar, Crossroads*. Publications: *India in Transition*, etc.

RADIVOJ UVALIC: Assistant Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs, Yugoslavia. Professor of Political Economy, University of Belgrade. Former Ambassador to India.

Observers

 United Nations Organization: J. HAMEL-MINNE.

International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies: JEAN D'ORMESSON, Deputy Secretary-General.

International Economic Association: MARY CROOK, Administrative Secretary.

International Peace Research Association: PHILIP EVERTS, Member of the Executive Committee of IPRA.

International Social Science Council: S. FRIEDMAN, Acting Secretary-General.

World Federation of United Nations Associations: KIE FULLERTON, WFUNA Representative at Unesco.

Indian National Commission for Cooperation with Unesco:

N. G. RANGA: Member of the Indian Parliament. One of the founders of the Swatantra Party.

A. G. SHEOREY: Managing Editor, *Nagpur Times*, Nagpur, India. Member, Press Council of India. Director, Press Trust of India. Imprisoned during India's struggle for independence, 1930-1 and 1942-5. Publications: *The Volcano*, a novel on the gandhian revolution, etc.

Members of the Secretariat of Unesco

MARIE-PIERRE HERZOG: Director, Division of Philosophy, Unesco. Agregee in Philosophy.

MAHDI ELMANDJRA: Assistant Director-General, Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Culture, 1966-1969, Unesco.

HARRY ALPERT: Director, Department of Social Sciences, 1967-1970, Unesco.

NADJM BAMMATE: Director, Cultural Studies Division, Unesco.

RENE HABACHI: Member of the Division of Philosophy, Unesco. Professor at the Lebanese University and at the American and French Universities in Beirut. Publications: *La pensee mediterraneenne; Une philosophie pour notre temps; Commencements de la Creature; La colonne brisee de Baalbeck; Orient, quel est ton Occident?*

Index of Participants

General Index

f. In this Index, words like 'Gandhi', 'truth', 'nonviolence', 'India', which recur throughout the book, have been left unreferenced. Where a word includes other related words, these have been shown within round brackets. Identifications, where necessary, have been shown within square brackets.
Prepared by Meera Mahadevan.

